A LONGITUDINAL INVESTIGATION OF CONTENT, RESOURCES, AND INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES IN A BASAL READING SERIES WITHIN A RESEARCH AND POLICY CONTEXT

by

Lori Ann Kenavey

Bachelor of Science, California University of Pennsylvania, 1993

Master of Education, California University of Pennsylvania, 1998

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

the School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2016

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

School of Education

This dissertation was presented

by

Lori Ann Kenavey

It was defended on

November 17, 2016

and approved by

Patricia A. Crawford, Ph.D., Department of Instruction and Learning

Margaret G. McKeown, Ph.D., Learning Research and Development Center and Department of Instruction and Learning

Michelle J. Sobolak, Ph.D., Department of Instruction and Learning

Dissertation Advisor: Linda L. Kucan, Ph.D., Department of Instruction and Learning

A LONGITUDINAL INVESTIGATION OF CONTENT, RESOURCES, AND INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES IN A BASAL READING SERIES WITHIN A RESEARCH AND POLICY CONTEXT

Lori Ann Kenavey, EdD

University of Pittsburgh, 2016

Basals have played an important role in classroom instruction for almost 200 years. Historically, basal programs have been influenced by both important research and policy reports. This study analyzed one publishing company's basal program across seven editions in order to trace the interaction of research, policy, and publication.

Teacher's editions for the first level of first grade from 1996 to 2014 were analyzed for the following: (a) research and policy context, (b) features of teacher's editions, (c) student readers: selection level and word level, (d) instructional approaches for phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling, (e) vocabulary selection and instructional approaches, (f) instructional approaches for comprehension, (g) supplemental resources.

The analyses revealed (a) a gap between research and uptake by the publisher, (b) direct influence of policy, and (c) influence of authorship. Implications of this investigation related to (a) teacher agency and specialized knowledge, (b) resources for evaluating basal resources, and (c) responsibilities of basal publishers are also discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

PREFACE

Numerous people have provided support and assistance who made this study possible. I'd like to thank my husband, sons, and family for your patience and support. A heartfelt thank you to Dr. Kucan for your guidance and encouragement throughout this long process. Also, to my committee members, Dr. Patricia Crawford, Dr. Margaret McKeown, and Dr. Michelle Sobolak, for taking time out of busy schedules to be on the committee. Thank you to my good friend and colleague, Regina Takos, for always being ready to listen, and especially for all your time spent recoding the manuals. Finally, I dedicate all my time and work to my six grandchildren who were born since I started this journey. My you all follow your dreams. Grammy loves you.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Basals, or commercially published sets of reading books designed to match students' grade levels, have played an important role in classroom instruction for almost 200 years. In 2010, the Education Market Research (as cited in Dewitz & Jones, 2013) estimated that 74 percent of elementary classroom teachers used a basal for their primary reading instruction. The first basal readers were the McGuffey Readers, popular beginning in the 1830's. In those books, suggestions for teaching were limited. By the 1930's, basal reading programs included separate teacher's manuals with several pages of teaching suggestions for each reading selection. Basal reading programs have grown and changed throughout the decades, but have remained a mainstay in the classroom.

There are a number of reasons for the consistently widespread use of basal readers. First, the basal has become a total language arts program offering a wide range of resources, including a student reader, or anthology, a teacher's manual, reading workbooks, spelling and grammar workbooks, writing handbooks, and a large assortment of additional materials. Some examples of these additional materials are big books, leveled books, phonemic awareness and phonics resources, assorted assessments, and materials to address struggling readers and students who are learning English as a second language. Second, the basal can be a useful resource for teachers, especially beginning teachers. It is tightly organized and sequences reading, writing, and grammar skills, and provides lists for teaching vocabulary and spelling. This allows teachers to

decrease the amount of preparation needed to teach a story. Another reason for widespread use of basals is that a basal series allows districts to align instruction across all buildings and grades. Such alignment can ensure that all students are receiving the same instruction, especially in larger school districts with students who may often move from school to school within the district. Lastly, state policy has played a large role in the use of basal readers. It is widely known that Texas and California have a textbook adoption policy that requires all schools in the state to use only approved books. Therefore, publishers create their reading books according to these states' mandates to ensure a share of the market.

Historically, basal programs have been influenced by both important research and policy reports. Some of the most noteworthy of these include *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (Chall, 1967), what has become known as *The First Grade Studies* (Bond & Dykstra, 1967), *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985), *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print* (Adams, 1990), and *Teaching Children to Read*, the study by the National Reading Panel (NICH, 2000). These reports were motivated by social and professional dissatisfaction with the reading achievement of students in the United States. The government or non-profit corporations funded the studies informing these reports in order to investigate the best ways to teach reading.

Despite their widespread use, however, there has been surprisingly little research on curriculum resources for teaching reading. The relevant literature includes 14 studies of basal reading programs, one study of reading intervention resources, and three studies of changes in texts over the years. Beck and her colleagues (Beck & McCaslin, 1978; Beck & Block, 1979) focused on analyzing first and second grade basal resources related to decoding and phonics from a research perspective. That is, they wanted to find out if basal resources were congruent

with research findings. The first of these studies examined eight reading programs for the letter/sound correspondences taught and the instructional approaches employed. The second study (Beck & Block, 1979) examined two beginning reading programs, one code-based and one basal, along several dimensions: (a) letter/sound instruction, (b) sight word learning, and, (c) the development of comprehension.

Analysis of first grade basal resources was also the focus of studies by Hoffman and his colleagues (Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoffman, Sailors, & Patterson, 2002). Hoffman and his colleagues wanted to document changes in first grade resources and relate them to historical trends, especially the emergence of literature-based and whole language approaches to reading. In 1994, Hoffman and his colleagues (Hoffman et al., 1994) compared the first-grade materials of five basal programs currently in use in Texas (copyright dates of 1986/1987) and five newly adopted basal programs adopted in 1993. The copyright 1993 programs were developed in response to the Texas textbook proclamation of 1990. The proclamation stated that programs should include connected text using quality, unabridged children's literature that was balanced between fiction and nonfiction. In addition, there should be a systematic and sequential approach to developing phonemic awareness and phonics skills. The analysis focused on the student texts at the word/sentence level as well as the characteristics of the literature included. These researchers also conducted a qualitative analysis of the teacher's editions.

In 2002 Hoffman and Sailors revisited the Texas basal programs again, to analyze the copyright 2000 basals. The Texas Proclamation of 1998 mandated that student texts at the first-grade level be 80% decodable. Hoffman and Sailors analyzed five approved basal programs for the decodability of text using a theoretical framework that emphasizes three factors that promote the acquisition of decoding skills: (a) instructional design, (b) accessibility, and (c) engaging

qualities. They also reanalyzed some of the data from the copyright 1987 and 1993 basals to compare the basal programs across the three adoption periods: 1986/1987, 1993, and 2002.

In 1999, Stein and her colleagues (Stein, Johnson, & Gutlohn, 1999) attempted to bridge the gap between research and practice through a systematic analysis of several first-grade basal reading programs adopted by California in 1996. Referencing current research, Stein and her colleagues identified two characteristics of effective beginning reading programs: (a) explicit phonics instruction, and (b) decodable text. Their analysis examined the phonics instruction provided and the congruence between the phonics students were learning and the words that appeared in the selections they were asked to read.

During the early 2000's, California and Texas mandated that first-grade reading programs include decodable texts, aligning themselves with research on beginning reading that supported the use of such text. The mandates from California and Texas were that decodable text should be 75% and 80% decodable, respectively. Although research supported the use of decodable texts, there was no data specifying the percentage of words that should be decodable. To examine the decodability issue, Foorman and her colleagues (Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, & Griffin, 2004) analyzed decodability in terms of the lexical and semantic features of words and the syntactic features of sentences in six widely used first-grade basal programs from 1995 to 2000. Their research was similar to the research conducted by Stein and her colleagues (1999) which examined phonics instruction and decodable text, but Foorman went further by computing decodability on the regularity of spelling patterns and the "consistency of sound-spelling relations" (Foorman et al., 2004, p. 170).

According to the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000), effective beginning reading instruction includes explicit, systematic phonics instruction and the opportunity to practice

reading with decodable text. Maslin (2007) analyzed five beginning basal reading programs from the early 2000's for decodability, readability, and phonics instruction to determine the alignment with current research.

Cooke and her colleagues (Cooke, Slee, & Young, 2008) examined first-grade basal reading programs with a different focus than the above researchers. Reviewing research that suggested that spelling should be embedded into reading instruction, they investigated the extent to which contextualized spelling was used to support reading in first grade. They analyzed 75 lessons across five core reading programs copyright 2002 to 2004, focusing on opportunities where spelling might support reading. They found that there was little integration in which spelling was integrated into the context of teaching reading skills

In the history of reading instruction, instructional approaches for phonics and decoding have been the subject of much debate and research, whereas there has not been as much attention to comprehension instruction. There are three studies that focused on comprehension instruction. Beck and her colleagues (Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, & Burkes, 1979) examined comprehension in two popular basal programs of the 1970's. Their focus was on comprehension instruction across grades one through six, with an emphasis on: (a) problems with sentence structure in the early grades, (b) pictures within the story, (c) background knowledge, (d) vocabulary, (e) direction setting for story lessons, (f) stopping points in stories, (g) story comprehension questions.

An influential study of basal reading programs was conducted by Durkin (1981) who examined the teacher's manuals of five basal reading programs to compare what the manuals offered to what was observed in classrooms. The classroom observations revealed that teachers tended to test comprehension rather than teach children how to comprehend. An analysis of the

teacher's manuals revealed that the manuals offered application and practice exercises instead of direct, explicit instruction in how to comprehend, which matched the type of instruction found in the classrooms. All five programs used assessment questions excessively and lacked teaching strategies for supporting students in answering those answers

Almost thirty years later, Dewitz and his colleagues (Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009) conducted research based on some of the questions Durkin raised as well as research reported in the report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000). Citing the NRP research, Dewitz and his colleagues described effective comprehension instruction as involving direct explanation of strategies followed by teacher modeling using a think aloud, and then guided practice with a gradual release of responsibility by the teacher. The spacing and timing of instruction was also taken into consideration. They examined comprehension instruction in five widely used 2005 editions of basal reading programs, focusing on instruction in grades 3, 4, and 5. The skills examined were narrowed to making inferences, narrative structure, and summarizing. The findings were… "although validated comprehension strategies are taught …they are not taught with the rigor, persistence, or design principles to ensure students' acquisition of these strategies" (Dewitz et al., 2009, p. 121).

With the implementation of Reading First, which was a part of the National Reading Panel policy (NICHD, 2000), there was great pressure on school districts to implement only approved basal reading programs. Two studies focused on the effect that policy may have on students, especially the struggling reader (McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solie & Zeig, 2006; Brenner & Hiebert, 2010). Revisiting Durkin's work (1981), McGill-Franzen and her colleagues used multiple analytic methods to examine the impact of two policy mandates in Florida. These were the adoption of basal reading programs in high-poverty schools and retention of third-graders

who score at the lowest-levels on the state assessments. Their findings suggested that curriculum standardization may be detrimental to the lowest-achieving students.

Brenner and Hiebert (2010) wanted to find out what opportunities for reading were provided in third-grade basal programs; that is, the actual number of words or volume of reading provided. When working with Reading First schools, Brenner and Hiebert suggested ways in which the teachers could increase student's volume of reading, that is, opportunities for students to read connected text. The response was that the teachers were not allowed to deviate from the directions in the basal reading programs. This led the researchers to analyze six Reading First-approved, third-grade basal reading programs (copyright 2002-2004) to determine the volume of text provided for students. The findings were that the volume of reading for an average student was 15 minutes a day, with the struggling reader reading even less.

The final investigation of basal resources was conducted by Wright and Neuman (2013), who examined the extent to which core reading materials supported vocabulary development in kindergarten. The researchers analyzed four widely used basal programs focusing on (a) the number of words taught per week; (b) how words were selected and how challenging the words were; (c) and the instructional regime – "a set of procedures that systematically engages students in learning words" (Wright & Neuman, 2013, p. 389). The findings indicated that the programs differed greatly on the number of words addressed each week, the difficulty of the target vocabulary words and the instructional approaches. They concluded that instruction in the kindergarten basal programs did not reflect current research for developing vocabulary.

Murray and her colleagues (2014) analyzed two reading intervention programs for struggling readers and compared them at the word level, text level, and program level. The initial review of the programs revealed that both featured phonics lessons, but one program's

texts featured many phonetically regular words (decodable) while the other program used leveled books. The findings indicated that the leveled text program is aligned with a meaning-emphasis philosophy and the decodable text program is aligned with a code-emphasis philosophy.

In 2011, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) developed a set of common core state standards (CCSS) defining what all students are expected to know at the end of each grade level. These standards were adopted by all states to ensure consistent goals across all states. The CCSSI maintained that the text complexity that students were exposed to had decreased while the text complexity of reading materials for college had held steady or risen. Therefore, the CCSS stressed the importance of increasing text complexity of K-12 texts.

Since the adoption of the CCSS, there have been three studies that examined text complexity. Stevens and his colleagues (Stevens, Liu, Baker, Ray, Eckert, & Gamson, 2015) analyzed the cognitive demands of reading curricula from 1910 to 2000. Texts from third and sixth grade reading curriculums were analyzed for the changes in text difficulty and comprehension tasks asked of the students. The text difficulty analysis measured lexical sophistication, lexical diversity (unique words), and syntactic complexity. The analysis of cognitive demands of comprehension tasks measured working memory load (amount of text a reader needs to process for the comprehension task), processing complexity (the use of prior knowledge), and level of ideas assessed (low-level ideas require the understanding of a single sentence while high-level ideas require deeper processing of the text). The overall results for third grade showed an increase in all measures of complexity across the 90 years (1910 – 2000). The overall results for sixth grade showed that the measures of complexity for texts remained stable over the time period.

In the second study, Fitzgerald and her colleagues (Fitzgerald, Elmore, Relyea, Hiebert & Stenner, 2015) analyzed the changes in text complexity across one publisher's first grade core reading program over the past six decades (1962, 1971, 1983, 1993, 2000, 2007, and 2013). There were three questions that guided the study: (a) Did overall text complexity levels shift across the seven program years?, (b) Did the progression of text-characteristic complexity from the beginning to the end of the first-grade year vary across program years?, and (c) Did text-characteristic levels vary as a function of program year?

Ten areas were measured. The first was the Overall Text Complexity measure, which used student responses during reading tasks and ordering of texts according to complexity by teachers and linking the two with a Lexile unit. Next, nine text characteristics that are considered critical at the word, sentence, and discourse levels that can support early reading were examined. At the word level, the number of syllables and the decoding levels of words were examined, while age of acquisition, degree of word abstractness, and word rareness were taken into account. Finally, repetition and redundancy in text, text density (information load), diversity of phrases, and degree to which the information in the text is compressible were examined for sentence/syntax and discourse load. In general, the results showed that there was a greater complexity for most of the text characteristics in the later editions. The overall text complexity levels increased from year to year and there was some degree of increased complexity for each of the nine text complexity characteristics.

In the last study, Hiebert (2015) analyzed changes in beginning reading texts, specifically relating those changes to the major turning points in beginning reading over the past 50 years. She then examined the research underlying three assumptions of reading instruction found in current core reading programs. These three assumptions were: (a) earlier is better, (b) word

repetition is not a factor, and (c) one size fits all. The anthologies of one publisher's core reading program over the past 50 years were analyzed. Four editions that were watersheds in beginning reading were chosen: 1962 – stress placed on repetition of high-frequency words; 1993 – text reflected whole language; 2000 – emergence of decodable text and strong phonics; and 2008 – formal literacy instruction moved to kindergarten. Hiebert concluded that research is needed to develop texts that integrate high-frequency words, phonetically regular words, and texts that are meaningful or engaging.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The above studies analyzed basal reading programs from research, historical, and policy perspectives. The purpose of the present study is to investigate one basal reading program's beginning of the year first grade resources, from 1996 to 2014. The analysis of these resources will be contextualized within concurrent developments in research and policy.

As a reading specialist, I am particularly concerned about the instructional approaches and resources provided to those who teach students with a wide range of experiences, skills, and abilities. The basal plays an important role in my district. I know how beginning teachers, as well as those with experience, make use of basal programs.

The results of this investigation provide a historical perspective on the impact of policy and research on the development of curricular materials for teaching reading in the United States. The investigation also foregrounds the importance of educational researchers sharing information about basal curriculum resources with teachers and administrators. Providing the results of their analyses can potentially inform decision making that affects instruction and student learning.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this investigation are:

1. How have the content, resources, and instructional approaches in the first-grade materials offered by a basal reading publisher changed over time from 1996 to 2014?
2. What do the changes in content, resources, and instructional approaches suggest about the influence of research and policy?

2.0 REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND POLICY

In this review, I focus on the methodology and findings in the studies described in chapter 1. I contextualize those studies by describing the research reports and policy initiatives that were influential during the time period of 1970-2015.

2.1 POLICY INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH REPORTS: 1960S – 1970S

In the 1950s and 1960s, the word method of teaching reading was at its peak. It has been documented that by the 1960s, "over 90 percent of the students in the country were taught to read using the word method" (Pearson, 2000, p. 6). The word method is often referred to as the Look-and-Say method because students were expected to learn to read by seeing words (often presented on flash cards) and saying them over and over again. This was the method used in the popular reading series known as the Dick and Jane books published by Scott Foresman (1950).

During this time, though, there was growing discontent about reading achievement among parents, reading experts, and experts in other scholarly fields and society in general. The discontent was expressed in several ways. First, Rudolf Flesch's book, *Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do about It* (1955), criticized teachers and schools for using the word method and not teaching phonics. He even offered parents a "home primer" with systematic phonics exercises for them to use with their children. Second, the United States received a wake-up call

with the Russian launch of Sputnik, causing reading instruction and other aspects of education to undergo criticism. Last, research on the best ways to teach beginning reading by linguists and other scholars were prolific and significant, offering alternative views on beginning reading instruction. One of the outcomes of discontent led to governmental support of education through initiatives, such as the War on Poverty during President Johnson's term (1965). A second outcome was monetary grants from the government and other philanthropic foundations to support reading research. These funds supported many of the research studies discussed below.

In 1962, when the discontent and debate on how to teach reading was at its pinnacle, a study was funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. The purpose of the study was to perform a critical analysis of existing reading research, compare different approaches to beginning reading, and describe the different methods or approaches to reading. The lead researcher was Jeanne Chall, a professor of education at Harvard University. The results of her analysis were published in 1967 in *Learning to Read, The Great Debate*.

One of the findings of the study was that from the 1930's through the 1960's there had been a consensus about beginning reading methods. Chall identified eight principles that characterized the resources and instructional approaches in reading materials of this time period. These principles included the following:

1. The goals of reading are comprehension and word recognition.
2. Instruction starts with silent reading based on students' interest.
3. A corpus of sight words is learned and only then does phonics begin.
4. Phonics should start slowly in first grade and instruction should last for six years.
5. Phonics should be integrated.
6. There should be a lot of repetition of words in the readers.

7. All students should go through a reading readiness period.
8. Instruction should be conducted in small groups.

Chall also examined the extensive body of research studies and classified them into four areas: (a) look-say versus phonics, (b) systematic phonics versus intrinsic phonics, (c) linguistic approaches, and (d) modified alphabets.

The look-say versus phonics investigation compared programs that taught visual recognition of words as a whole and programs that taught any type of phonics. Chall considered nine studies, all conducted before 1930. Her analysis indicated that an initial phonics approach produced better results than the look-say approach to reading. That is, students who had been taught any type of phonics had a greater advantage on decoding untaught words than the students who had simply memorized words.

A systematic phonics approach teaches phonics early and systematically, focusing on letter/sound correspondences and providing opportunities for students to practice blending sounds together to make words. In contrast, an intrinsic phonics approach stresses sight word reading and introduces phonics after many sight words are memorized. Intrinsic phonics instruction involves students in learning the sounds associated with letters by analyzing known sight words, using context clues and pictures. Twenty-five studies that compared systematic and intrinsic phonics were analyzed. In all categories, students who were taught with a systematic phonics program performed better on the reading assessments than students taught using an intrinsic phonics approach. The studies showed that students who began with systematic phonics were superior in word recognition and spelling achievement at least through third grade.

A linguistic approach to reading focuses on the idea that students come to school with a command of spoken language; therefore, reading instruction should teach students the print equivalent of the oral language, beginning with words that are regularly spelled. There were only a few studies available investigating linguistic approaches to early reading instruction, but Chall asserted that the approaches were effective because they were similar to systematic phonics. The programs placed a greater stress on decoding regularly spelled words in the initial reading instruction.

A modified alphabet program adjusts or extends the alphabet for beginning readers. For example, it may use diacritical markings, (e.g., marking a vowel with a breve (˘) to denote a short vowel sound, or marking a vowel with a macron (¯) to denote a long vowel sound) or the alphabet may be increased to 44 characters to correspond closer to the sounds in the English language. Thus, instead of *a* representing a short and long sound, the program would use the letter *a* for the short *a* sound and the letters *ae* to represent the long *a* sound. The word *at* would be written *at* while the word *cake* would be written *caek.* Once students learn how to read using the modified alphabet the program introduces text using standard English. Because there were only a few modified alphabet programs available for Chall to analyze, she offered no conclusions because the evidence was too limited.

In his historical summary of reading instruction, Pearson (2000) categorized Chall's findings into five broad charges: (a) an early emphasis on phonics, (b) a re-examination of reader content with a focus on folk tales, (c) increased rigor at every grade level, (d) development of new tests, and (e) improved reading research. The biggest impact of Chall's work was the recommendation that phonics should be used as a method for teaching beginning reading along with a reading-for-meaning focus. This recommendation led to an overhauling of the basals in

two ways: analytic, or intrinsic phonics, was implemented in the basals at the beginning of first grade; that is, whole words were analyzed for spelling patterns. And the Dick and Jane stories, which were contrived stories based on the look-say method, were replaced with a wider array of stories and adaptations of children's literature.

Coinciding with Chall's research was another landmark study conducted by Bond and Dykstra (1967), known as the First-Grade Reading Studies, funded by the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education. All the studies collected the same information about students, teachers and schools, and involved the administration of the same pre- and posttests. Each investigation was conducted by different teams, who shared their data with the Coordinating Center, which then completed an analysis across the individual projects.

The study was a collection of 27 individual projects conducted across the United States designed to gather data on three questions: (a) what are the common characteristics related to reading achievement? (b) which approaches to initial reading produced superior results? (c) is any program uniquely effective or ineffective for teaching reading? (Graves & Dykstra, 1997). The study compared the Basal Reading Program against five instructional approaches: (a) Initial Teaching Alphabet, (b) Basal plus Phonics, (c) Language Experience, (d) Linguistic, and (e) Phonic/Linguistic.

Basal Reading Programs placed emphasis on word recognition and comprehension, silent reading, and controlled vocabulary. The programs introduced some sight words before introducing phonics, and encouraged the use of structural analysis, context clues, and pictures. The Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA) approach was a modified alphabet program using a special alphabet consisting of 44 characters. The Basal plus Phonics approach included a basal reading program and supplementary phonics materials. The Language Experience approach to teaching

reading relies on students' dictation and writing as the texts from which they learn how to read. The primary assumption for the Language Experience approach is that because the words in the text come from students themselves, they will be able to recognize enough of the words. An approach was labeled Linguistic if it introduced the letter/sound correspondences early using careful sequencing with a focus on decoding and not comprehension. One program was labeled as Phonic/Linguistic because it did not fit well into any other category, although it had characteristics in common with phonics.

The results of the comparison of these approaches revealed several important findings. First, the best predictors of first-grade reading success were found to be knowledge of letter names and students' ability to discriminate between sounds in words. Second, students who had the ability to read phonetically regular words also had skill in reading words of high utility even though the words might be highly irregular. Last, students who came to school with skills of auditory and visual discrimination and an understanding of print were more successful in learning to read, no matter what approach was used for initial reading (Bond & Dykstra, 1967).

Two important recommendations were that a systematic phonics approach should be included in reading instruction, and the words used in stories should be selected with a greater balance between phonetically regular words (such as *cat* and *stop*) and high-utility but phonetically irregular words (such as *the* and *have*).

Teachers' attitudes towards phonics were changed because of the First Grade Studies and Chall's book, and basal publishers responded. In the 1970's, Beck and her colleagues wanted to find out if the basal programs in use were congruent with the findings of Chall (1967), Bond and Dykstra (1967), and other research studies. Three different studies were completed, two focusing on phonics (Beck & McCaslin, 1978; Beck & Block, 1979) and one focusing on comprehension

(Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, & Burkes,1979). An in-depth examination of those three studies follows.

Beck and McCaslin examined eight programs that would be used with compensatory education students, or students who were having difficulty learning how to read. These programs were categorized as code-emphasis and basal. A code-emphasis program was described as a program in which phonics skills and letter/sounds are introduced prior to reading a story and the story is used for practicing the new skills. In contrast, in a basal program, the story is read first and, afterword, phonics skills are taught. Citing past research, including Chall's work in the 1960's, and their own experiences, Beck and McCaslin asserted that the "primary objective of beginning reading is the acquisition of word-attack skills and word-recognition abilities" (Beck & McCaslin, 1978, p. 5). Therefore, the analyses were completed to study how the eight programs agreed or differed with current research findings, logical arguments and practical experience.

Beck and McCaslin examined first and second grade basal materials to find out: (a) how many and which letter/sound correspondences were taught through second grade, (b) the sequence of introduction, with special attention to when potentially confusing letters, such as *b* and *d*, were introduced, (c) the potential for specific letter/sounds to be used to create meaningful words, and (d) the instructional strategies used to present the material.

The first task that Beck and McCaslin undertook was to determine how many letter/sound combinations were taught through second grade. Although it was noted that there was no consensus within the research about the ideal number, the programs ranged from a high of 135 to a low of 65. The second task was to examine the programs for which specific letter/sound combinations were taught. It was found that all of the programs taught the most frequently used

single consonants, short vowels, and the most often used long vowels (*a, i, o,* and *u)* in CVCe words (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant-Silent e).

Beck and McCaslin then isolated potential sequencing problems and examined the eight programs to determine how the publishers handled five different variables. The areas identified were: (a) "look alike" letters (such as *b* and *d*), (b) letters with more than one sound (short/long vowels), (c) consonant digraphs (such as *ch* and *sh*), and (d) the utility of specific letter/sound combinations for creating meaningful words. Beck and McCaslin noted that to prevent confusion between two letters that are similar in form, time should elapse before introduction of the second letter. Two of the programs (one code-based and one basal) allowed approximately one half of a year to elapse between the introduction of two similar letters, while the other programs introduced them closer together.

While examining letters that had more than one sound (for example, short *a* as in *cap,* and long *a* as in *cape*), Beck and McCaslin found that there was a wide range for when the sounds were taught. Some of the programs introduced both sounds in the same lesson, while other programs waited for almost a full year before introducing the second sound of the letter. Beck and McCaslin advised teachers to take a "middle" ground in the introduction of the second sound, not at the same time, yet not too far apart. According to that criterion, approximately half of the programs (all basals) followed the middle ground approach.

In regard to teaching consonant digraphs (e.g., *ch, th, sh*), Beck and McCaslin asserted that digraphs should be introduced early to students to reinforce the concept that "a target letter must be considered in its environment with other letters before its sound can be determined" (Beck & McCaslin, 1978, p. 34). Four of the programs (two code-based and two basals) were shown to introduce digraphs early, within the first half of first grade.

The last two dimensions that Beck and McCaslin examined were the selection of letter/sound correspondences and their potential for making meaningful words. For example, one program introduced *b, l, r, h,* and *j* first, allowing for no meaningful words to be created. Whereas, another program began with *a, m, n, t,* and *p,* which could be used to create eight meaningful words (*am, an, nap, tap, pat, pam, man,* and *mat*). First, Beck and McCaslin focused on research conducted by Coleman (1970) that produced a list of the fifteen easiest-to-learn letter/sound correspondences. Along with that, Beck and McCaslin noted that it is also important that the letter/sound correspondences be usable for creating real words. The conclusion was that all of the programs used some of the fifteen easiest-to-learn letter/sounds, but, overall, only five of the programs allowed meaningful words to be made. No words could be made with three of the basal programs, because no vowels were introduced within the first fifteen letter/sound sequences.

After examining letter/sound correspondences, Beck and McCaslin examined the programs using two variables: (a) determining the ease of learning the letter/sound correspondences and (b) students' ability to use their knowledge to blend the sounds into words. Beck and McCaslin revealed that students receiving instruction from any of the code-emphasis programs would learn letter/sound correspondences, but not all of the programs would provide opportunities for students to use that knowledge to blend the sounds into words. Two of the programs did explicitly teach how to blend letter/sound correspondences into words, and two of the programs offered no instructional strategy for blending.

In summary, Beck and McCaslin asserted that a model for successful reading programs should contain: (a) direct, explicit instruction of letter/sound correspondences, (b) an

instructional strategy for teaching blending letter/sound correspondences into words, and (c) repeated opportunities to blend the letter/sound correspondences into words in connected text.

Beck and Block asserted that the type of reading program used in a classroom "shapes the nature of classroom reading practices" (Beck & Block, 1979, p. 279). Thus, they conducted an analysis of reading programs, focusing on aspects of program design that they considered to be instructional factors that could facilitate or impede learning. They examined two beginning reading programs for their content sequence and instructional strategies, with specific attention to support for students who struggled with learning to read. Two programs with very different views of reading were examined: a popular basal program of the 1970's and a code-emphasis program specifically designed for students who struggled with reading. There were two reasons for comparing these two different programs. The first was to complete an in-depth look at contemporary phonics instruction since the publishing of Chall's work in 1967. The second was to develop methods that could be used for the analysis of instructional programs.

According to Beck and Block the "primary objective of beginning reading instruction is the acquisition of decoding skills" (Beck & Block, 1979, p.280). Therefore, the major part of the analysis was on: (a) what letter/sound correspondences were taught through second grade, (b) the pacing of the introduction of the letter/sounds, (c) how many correspondences were taught per book and the difficulty level of those correspondences, (d) the time lapse between instruction for letters that represent more than one sound, (e) how many meaningful words could be generated using the sequence of introduction of the letter/sound correspondences in the program, (f) when and what kinds of sight words were taught, and (g) opportunities for reinforcing sight words in the selection read by students. Both of the reading programs examined provided earlier and more

systematic instruction in letter/sound correspondence than older whole-word programs. Thus, there was an ordered sequence for introducing the letter/sound correspondences.

In order to analyze the instructional sequence in a principled manner, Beck and Block first identified the letter/sound correspondences taught through second grade and constructed a sequence chart. They then compared the pacing of the introduction of letter/sound correspondences. Both programs introduced approximately the same number of correspondences (approximately 90) through second grade, but there was a difference in the number taught in first grade. The basal program covered 52 correspondences in first grade, and 41 in second grade. The code-emphasis program covered 69 correspondences in first grade, and 22 in second grade. Beck and Block preferred the more even distribution found in the basal.

The pacing, or the number of letter/sound correspondences taught in each book was examined next, with attention to the difficulty of some correspondences that would require a slower pace and more practice opportunities. Neither program introduced letters that could represent two sounds simultaneously, such as long and short vowels. The code-emphasis program taught regular letter/sound correspondences, that is, letter/sounds with a one-to-one correspondence between a letter and one sound. Long vowels and digraphs were not introduced until second grade. The basal program introduced both long and short vowels, and vowel and consonant digraphs in the first grade; that is, multiple sounds represented by one letter were introduced in close proximity. Beck and Block preferred the basal program of introducing multiple sounds early on because such an approach taught students to attend to all letters in a word.

The next area examined was how many meaningful words could be generated using the sequence of introduction of the letter/sound correspondences in the program. To determine this,

the sequence chart was examined for what combinations of words could be created using the letter/sound correspondences that were taught to a certain point. For example, by the middle of first grade in the basal program 64 meaningful words could be created (e.g., *ride, pig, kite*). In contrast, the code-emphasis introduced the letters *w* and *z* early in first grade, allowing for words such as *zig, zag, zip, wag, wig,* and *win* to be created. Beck and Block preferred the basal program because it allowed for a greater number of meaningful words to be created earlier.

The next dimension that Beck and Block examined was sight word instruction. In the basal program, the sight words introduced were selected from high-frequency words and words that would be familiar based on students' experiences. Since the purpose of a code-emphasis program is to apply learned letter/sound correspondences to words appearing in connected text, the selection of sight words was constrained by what letter/sound correspondences had been taught. A word was introduced as a sight word when all of the letter/sound correspondences in that word had not been taught.

The basal program maintained the sight words by including them in stories over and over again. That was possible because the words selected were words that could be used in different contexts and stories such as *said, what,* and *down*. The code-emphasis program introduced sight words but did not repeat them across stories. Beck and Block favored the basal program because the words that were selected were of high utility and could be used in a wide variety of stories.

Beck and Block also looked at comprehension instruction. Both programs developed comprehension through activities that occurred before, during, and after reading, but neither program offered an adequate description of the content of the comprehension instruction.

An important outcome of the Beck and Block study was their method of analysis. By simply sequencing the letter/sound correspondences taught in a program, they could figure out

what words that could be created from those correspondences. Another important outcome of the study was that more information was needed about comprehension instruction.

Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, and Burkes (1979) examined two popular 1976 basal programs for the purpose of identifying issues that might affect students' comprehension. Toward that end, they reviewed 1st grade through 6th grade basal materials, focusing on: (a) characteristics of the texts, (b) omitting words, ambiguous expressions, and other textual limits in the earliest grades, (c) effect of pictures on comprehension, (d) background knowledge in the later primary grades, (e) vocabulary (f) setting the purpose for reading, (g) stopping points during reading, and (h) after-reading questioning.

To set the background for the research, Beck and her colleagues described some of the characteristics found in the basal resources. First, they noted that a Directed Reading approach was used. This approach involved: (a) preparation for reading, such as building background, introducing vocabulary, and providing a purpose for reading, (b) silent reading of the selection, (c) teacher questioning after reading, and (d) instruction for specific reading skills, such as phonics analysis or comprehension skills. The selections students were to read in both basal programs were predominately fiction and were excerpts from children's literature.

In examining the basal programs, Beck and her colleagues found that some of the basal selections for beginning readers might be difficult to comprehend because of the omission of information, use of alternative wording, and substitution of words to convey meaning. For example, in a story about two animals having a race, the word *race* was never even used.

All selections for beginning readers included pictures, which might help to clarify or reinforce story concepts and carry the story line. Beck and her colleagues recommended that

pictures should help clarify text, efforts should be made to keep pictures and text consistent, and there should be careful use of teacher dialogue to clarify pictures as needed.

Beck and her colleagues examined the primary and the intermediate grade texts to determine how well the programs prepared students for reading a selection, such as introducing new concepts (building background knowledge). They concluded that although the 1976 text selections were more conceptually difficult than in earlier versions, the programs reduced pre-reading activities to build students' background knowledge.

Beck and her colleagues examined vocabulary instruction for grades three through six to describe how the programs developed vocabulary. They found that in both programs students were expected to learn new words during reading by inferring the meanings or using the glossary to look up unfamiliar words. Since the selections were excerpts of children's literature, and not written to specifically teach the meanings of words, Beck and her colleagues concluded that learning the meaning of the words was left to chance and that students were not likely to use the glossary to assist in making meaning.

The researchers also analyzed instructional approaches for setting a purpose for reading, to get students thinking about the directions that the story might take. Beck and her colleagues proposed that direction setting activities should provide a framework for organizing events and concepts in the text so that they interrelate and are meaningful. In both basal programs, Beck and her colleagues found that there were inappropriate stopping points caused by page layout of the story and stopping in the middle of a conversation or an action, which might impede comprehension.

The last aspect of comprehension that Beck and her colleagues examined was questioning students as an aid in developing comprehension. They proposed that the "primary function of

questions should be to develop a map of the story (Beck et. al., 1979, p.128). Questions should tap the information that is central to developing the story, and the questions in the two basal programs were not designed toward formulating a story map to help students synthesize story information.

The work of Beck and her colleagues' provided useful information that could be used as a basis for empirical investigation to improve instructional practices to facilitate students' comprehension.

The research conducted by Chall (1967) and Bond and Dykstra (1967) was influential in changing reading instruction. But, as the three landmark research studies conducted by Beck and her colleagues concluded, the basal reading programs of the 1970's had changed but they had not totally implemented the research and there was room for improvement. Phonics instruction was moved to the beginning of first grade, although it was not the systematic phonics that the research of Chall and Bond and Dykstra suggested. Also, the research had focused on phonics and very little on comprehension.

2.2 POLICY INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH REPORTS: 1980S

Durkin's research (1981) had involved observations in classrooms in order to document approaches to comprehension instruction. These observations revealed that almost no comprehension instruction was seen in grade 3-6 classrooms. Rather, most of the instruction was actually assessment of comprehension. Based on those findings, Durkin decided to compare what was observed in the classroom to what was suggested by the basal teacher's manuals. She

analyzed five kindergarten through sixth grade (1978-1979) basal programs in order to determine what the manuals recommended for teaching students how to comprehend.

Durkin searched for other research studies on comprehension while preparing for her research and referred to the work by Chall (1967), Beck and McCaslin (1978), Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, and Burkes (1979), and a few master's theses. From these studies, Durkin concluded that the basal manuals "are generous in providing definitions, assessment questions, and practice exercises but very limited in what they propose for instruction" (Durkin, 1981, p. 518).

Durkin proceeded to identify and sort comprehension activities found in the manuals into six categories: (a) instruction, (b) review, (c) application, (d) practice, (e) preparation, and (f) assessment. Her review of comprehension instruction in all of the series revealed that instructional support was nonspecific and randomly placed, suggesting that there was not a carefully constructed plan. Durkin had expected to find a suggestion for comprehension instruction followed by application. This was not the case. There was actually a large discrepancy between the frequency of instruction and frequency of application. The basals offered more written exercises than application activities, reflecting the assumption that "children come to understand by doing, not by receiving direct, explicit instruction that is complemented with application and practice" (Durkin, 1981, p. 524). Many of these exercises used brief pieces of text for practice and jumped from one skill to another, such as main idea and sequence of events.

Building background and introducing new vocabulary are usually used to prepare students for reading a selection. According to Durkin, there was very little attention given to new vocabulary in the middle and upper grades. Students were expected to be able to figure out the new words using contextual and graphophonic cues.

Durkin's conclusion was that there was a close match between what was observed in the classrooms and the basal manuals. Both the teachers and the manuals neglected direct instruction and made use of numerous assessment and practice exercises and excessive questioning instead.

By the late 1970s, coinciding with Beck and her colleagues' and Durkin's research, a challenge emerged to the philosophy and pedagogy of reading. Reading was embraced and studied by scholars from many different fields, such as linguists, cognitive psychologists, and others. The influences from these fields produced a fundamental shift in views of reading instruction, and by the early 1980s, the Whole Language Movement emerged as the new instructional approach to reading. The Whole Language Movement was grounded in a child-centered pedagogy, which emphasized that students construct their own meanings from text, influenced by each student's interests. Whole Language was seen as a holistic method with an emphasis on comprehension, the use of literature-based materials, integration of language arts across the curriculum, and process writing. The teacher's main role was one of a facilitator rather than an instructor.

Since comprehension was viewed as the core to reading, instruction in phonics and other skills was deemphasized. Basal readers were discarded in favor of using "real books" (published children's literature). The goal was to make beginning reading instruction enjoyable and meaningful for students through the use of authentic texts and activities. Whole language proponents believed that readers used multiple cueing systems: syntactic cues, semantic cues, and grapho-phonemic cues. If students became proficient at using them, what they needed to know about decoding would be learned through these systems (Teale, 1995). Therefore, in first grade, phonics was taught to small groups only as the need arose. Integration of language arts

occurred across the curriculum through the use of thematic units and students were taught process writing (prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing for a genuine audience and purpose) starting in first grade.

Whole language had a profound effect on basal readers. The anthologies became literature based, using published children's literature with no alterations. The publishers "basalized the activities and tools of whole language" (Pearson, 2004, p.218). In essence, basal programs were changed so that they followed the ideals of whole language, such as having a writing process component, a deeper level of questioning and tasks, and integrating language arts activities as core lesson components while diminishing individualized skills instruction.

In the midst of the whole language movement, an important report was published. *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985) was produced by the National Academy of Education's Commission of Education and Public Policy. It was funded by the National Institute of Education, an office of the United States Department of Education. The purpose of the report was to "summarize currently available research and to draw implications for reading instruction" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 3). The study investigated six topics: (a) defining reading, (b) emerging literacy, (c) extending literacy, (d) the teacher in the classroom, (e) testing, and, (f) teacher education.

The researchers asserted that there were five generalizations to define reading. First, reading is a constructive process. When interpreting a text, readers use prior knowledge to help construct meaning. Second, reading must be fluent with fast and accurate word identification. Third, reading must be strategic. Readers must be able to monitor their comprehension and know how to use fix-up strategies when comprehension fails. Fourth, reading requires motivation through fast-paced and varied lessons. The teacher must also ensure that students

read materials that they will have success with. Finally, reading is a continuously developing skill, which demands continuous practice, development and refinement.

The notion of emerging literacy focused on preschoolers and first graders and what children brought to their school experiences before formal instruction. The research revealed that parents play an important role in laying the foundation for reading. Kindergarten programs should emphasize oral language, writing, and beginning reading skills. Phonics instruction should include teaching the sounds of letters in isolation and in words, and blending sounds together. The first reading book should include decodable selections, with complete and interesting stories in later books. Both oral and silent reading is important for the beginning reader, and reading lessons should focus on comprehension and direct instruction of comprehension skills and strategies.

The idea of extending literacy focused on the quality of school textbooks, the nature of teacher instruction, and opportunities for meaningful practice. The suggestions from the committee were that teachers should devote more time to comprehension instruction with students spending less time completing workbook pages and more time writing and independently reading. Textbooks should be clearly written, well-organized, and contain important information and concepts. Schools should have high expectations, good leadership, an emphasis on academic learning, order and discipline, and uninterrupted time for learning. Schools should also maintain well-stocked and managed libraries.

Recommendations for the final three topics included that more comprehensive assessments of reading and writing be developed, that efforts be directed to improve the teaching field to attract more teachers, and that schools provide for continuing professional development of teachers.

Becoming a Nation of Readers paralleled Chall's findings in emphasizing the use of systematic phonics, but it also recommended that selections should be interesting and decodable. Anderson and his colleagues also documented the importance of "just reading" as a critical component to elementary reading programs, which helped position literature-based reading in the forefront of the whole language movement.

2.3 POLICY INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH REPORTS: 1990S

By the mid-1980s researchers again focused on phonics and other issues in early reading. The Center for the Study of Reading proposed to the U.S. Department of Education's Reading Research and Education Center that all aspects of phonics and early reading instruction be thoroughly reviewed. Marilyn Jager Adams was chosen to conduct the review because of her strong background in basic reading processes and involvement in transferring research into classroom procedures. The project was originally conceptualized as an updated version of Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967) but turned into a complete review of the expanding knowledge available in phonics, phonemic awareness, instructional practices in word and letter identification, and the processes involved in learning to read. Adam's research reviewed the previous twenty years of basic and applied research in education and psychology in an effort to "provide guidance as to how instruction might be achieved so as to be most efficient and most effective and to provide the best support possible toward the purpose for learning to read – comprehension" (Adams, 1990, p. 28).

Adams began her work with a clarification of how context, meaning, orthographic and phonological processors interact during the reading process of skilled readers. She examined a

wide range of research and determined that the best predictor of reading in young children was their knowledge of letters and their level of phonemic awareness. She concluded that the single most important activity for building pre-reading skills is reading aloud to children. Children must acquire an awareness of words and phonemes, and this can be done quite easily through exposure to print. Adams revealed that fluent readers develop phonemic awareness, letter recognition, familiarity with spelling patterns, spelling–sound relations, and individual words in parallel with real reading and reflection on the meaning of the text information.

Adams came up with the same conclusion as Chall: systematic phonics instruction is critical in learning how to read. She suggested that reading programs should strive to maintain a balance between phonics and comprehension. She also concluded that invented spelling should be encouraged because it helps students to develop phonemic awareness and promotes their understanding of the alphabetic principle. Also, students should be given the opportunity to practice their reading using text that is at an appropriate level of difficulty.

In 1994, Hoffman and his colleagues compared 1986/1987 basal programs used in Texas to the 1993 Texas adopted basal programs. The programs used in Texas were chosen because of the influence the state of Texas has on educational publishing. As noted earlier, it is widely known that Texas, along with California, has a textbook adoption policy that requires all schools in the state to use only approved books. Therefore, when the Texas State Board of Education issued its textbook proclamation in 1990, publishers tailored their materials to meet the requirements of the proclamation to ensure a share of the market. The focus of the analysis by Hoffman and his colleagues was on the first-grade student texts and the teacher's editions.

The selections in the student texts were analyzed at the word/sentence level to determine: (a) readability, (b) total number of words and total number of different words, and (c) a

calculation of the average number of syllables per word and number of words per sentence. The results of the analysis revealed that there were fewer words in the 1993 selections than in the 1986/1987 selections, but there were more unique words in each selection. The number of syllables in the words and the number of words in a sentence also increased from 1986/1987 to 1993. The vocabulary control and repetition that characterized the 1986/1987 selections were no longer in evidence.

The student texts were also analyzed for literature characteristics, including (a) source and adaptation of story, (b) genre, (c) add-ons, (d) engagement of text, (e) predictability, and, (f) decodability. The researchers found that more than 80% of the literature in the 1986/1987 programs were written by the basal publishers and material from children's trade literature was adapted to an extreme degree. In contrast, almost all of the 1993 selections were from published literature with minimal adaptations. The percentage of realistic and fantasy stories in the basal programs decreased from 1986/1987 to 1993, while there was a large increase in poetry and predictable stories.

Hoffman and his colleagues revealed that there was a dramatic decrease in all of the "add-ons," such as skills/activity pages and writing activities, with the exception of author/illustrator information, which increased. In attempting to answer the question about how engaging selections were, Hoffman and his colleagues concluded that the selections in the 1993 series were more engaging than those in the 1986/1987 series, with more complex plots, character development, imagery, and better design features.

Each selection was rated on nine features for predictability: (a) repeated pattern, (b) familiar concepts, (c) good match between text and print that cues vocabulary, (d) rhyme, (e) rhythm, (f) alliteration, (g) cumulative pattern, (h) familiar song/story, and, (i) familiar sequence.

The results revealed that more than 50% of the selections in the 1993 basals offered features that would make them more predictable.

A text with a high decodability rating would consist of common, one-syllable sight words, high repetition, and few words with digraphs or vowel combinations. The decodability rating of the 1993 selections was lower than the decodability rating for the 1986/1987 selections.

Hoffman and his colleagues also analyzed the teacher's editions, focusing on ten features of the basal programs: (a) instructional design, (b) guided reading, (c) vocabulary (d) questioning, (e) skills, (f) levels and pacing, (g) grouping, (h) entry, (i) assessment, and (j) tone.

Instructional Design refers to the overall organization of the teaching. The two programs were significantly different from each other. The 1986/1987 program employed the instructional approach of: (a) introducing a skill, (b) applying a skill through the reading of a selection, (c) checking comprehension, and (d) extending and enriching. The 1993 program employed the instructional approach of: (a) engaging the reader, (b) reading and responding to the selection several times, and (c) encouraging the reader to explore the literature to develop skills and strategies.

Guided Reading refers to the instructional support provided by the teacher before, during and after reading. The 1986/1987 basal programs employed a Directed Reading Activity of building background, guided silent reading of the text, and end-of-story discussion. The 1993 basal programs employed a Shared Reading Model, in which the teacher first read the story aloud to students, next the students and teacher read together, and, finally, students practiced reading on their own or with partners.

The introduction of vocabulary in the 1986/1987 basal programs consisted of teachers presenting words in isolation, focusing on decoding the words. The 1993 basal programs

focused on developing deeper understanding of words, using creative activities. For example, to develop vocabulary for *The Foot Book* by Dr. Seuss (1996), the teacher was instructed to write "one foot" inside of the shape of a foot and continue adding footprints with phrases from the book, such as "two feet" and "more feet."

The types of questions used to assess comprehension within the two basal programs differed markedly. The 1986/1987 program offered literal questions for the teacher to ask, while the 1993 program reduced the number of questions, but had a greater emphasis on inferential types of questions. There was an emphasis of skills development in the 1986/1987 programs, especially phonics, but the skills were taught in isolation from the story. In contrast, while the 1993 program continued to emphasize the teaching of skills, the focus changed to teaching the skills connected to the literature and after the reading of a selection.

The two programs differed, also, in materials designed for the very first level of instruction. The 1986/1987 programs focused on student readiness, with the goal of supporting students in acquiring a prerequisite set of skills as the entry into the program. The 1993 programs focused on the idea of emergent literacy, addressing a child's current level of literacy and moving on from there.

The 1986/1987 programs supported ability grouping, while the 1993 programs focused on a model of whole class instruction with movement into flexible small groups. Assessment shifted from formal testing in the 1986/1987 to a portfolio approach in the 1993 programs. Lastly, the 1986/1987 basal programs were highly prescriptive, providing explicit instruction about what to do, when and how, while the tone of the 1993 programs were more suggestive, using language such as "if you choose..." and "you may want to…"

Another research study conducted in the late 1990s attempted to analyze the relationship between research and practice in beginning reading instruction. Stein and her colleagues (1999) evaluated the instruction in seven basal programs and two supplementary phonics programs (copyright 1995-1997) adopted by California in 1996, focusing on explicit phonics instruction and decodable text. The predominant phonics approaches were analyzed to determine whether the approach was explicit or implicit. One basal and one supplemental phonics program incorporated an explicit phonics approach while all of the other programs incorporated an implicit phonics approach.

Next, each main text selection and supplemental phonics readers from the first half of the first grade basals were converted into a list of words. The words were placed into one of four categories: (a) Dolch List sight words, (b) story sight words, (c) wholly decodable words, or (d) non-decodable/non-instructed words. Dolch List words are words from a list of the most commonly used words in the English language, such as *the, is, said, down, look,* and *come.* Story sight words were any words that were introduced for the story. Wholly decodable words were words that could be decoded based on letter/sound correspondences that had been taught. Examples of wholly decodable words would be *man, cat, rat,* and *mat,* only if the letter/sound correspondences for *a, c, m, n,* and *r* had previously been taught. A word was listed as a non-decodable/non-instructed word if it was not wholly decodable nor had been introduced as a sight word. After categorizing the words, the percentage of each word category for each basal was calculated to determine overall relationship to decoding instruction.

Stein and her colleagues revealed that there was a significant gap between research and the practices included in the 1996 basals. Specifically, the predominant approach to phonics instruction was implicit phonics, and not explicit phonics as research suggested. Also, the words

in the text selections had little relationship to the decoding instruction. The text selections in the basal readers included fewer than 15% wholly decodable words. Even the supplemental phonics programs contained selections with only 4% to 21% wholly decodable words. When instruction in both sight words and letter/sound correspondences were considered, the researchers concluded that students would not be able to read 32% to 57% of the words in the selections.

Stein and her colleagues stressed that the research literature suggested that a beginning reading approach is likely to affect student achievement and that text selections should consist of a higher proportion of decodable words combined with previously introduced sight words. They concluded their study with a caution that educators responsible for selecting published programs should evaluate suggested the instructional practices by using research-based criteria.

2.4 POLICY INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH REPORTS: 2000S

2.4.1 Texas Textbook Proclamation

In 2002, Hoffman and his colleagues (Hoffman, Sailors & Patterson, 2002) continued their work of exploring the changes in basal texts associated with requirements for Texas reading textbooks. They did so by examining the basals developed to meet the requirements for the 2000 adoption cycle and comparing them to the basals developed to meet the 1987 and 1993 requirements. Hoffman and his colleagues had analyzed the copyright 1987 and 1993 basals by focusing on the total number of words and the total number of unique words in each publisher's programs. The 2002 study was designed to provide an overview of historical trends by comparing the total number of words and the total number of unique words in the copyright 1987, 1993 and 2000

reading series. An important addition was analyzing the decodability of the copyright 2000 texts.

The Texas Textbook Proclamation of 1998 required first grade texts to be 80% decodable. Decodability was defined as percentage of words that could be read accurately through the use of phonics rules that had been explicitly taught up to that point. Five publishers submitted programs to the Texas Education Agency that met the 80% standard and those were the programs analyzed. Hoffman and his colleagues analyzed the programs in two ways: (a) the holistic analysis of texts, focusing on instructional design, text predictability, and engaging qualities of text, which had been used in the 1994 analysis, and (b) the CIERA Text Analysis Program, a software program that assessed text for repeated high frequency words.

Hoffman and his colleagues looked at three factors they deemed to be important in decodable texts used in beginning reading: (a) instructional design, (b) accessibility, and (c) engaging qualities.

Instructional design referred to the instructional approach employed within a program to build decoding skills. "Text with a strong instructional design for beginning readers provides for repeated exposure to these patterns, starting with the simplest, most common, and most regular words" (Hoffman et al., 2002, p.4) and then builds to more complex words. Hoffman and his colleagues concluded that there was increased attention by the basal publishers to instructional design related to decodability. The programs provided reading practice with fewer words for beginning readers. The copyright 2000 basal selections introduced fewer, more decodable words than the copyright 1987 and 1993 basals.

Accessibility refers to the level of difficulty for students in recognizing words with a special focus on decodability and predictability. Hoffman and his colleagues concluded that the

copyright 2000 selections for beginning readers were far less predictable than selections in previous adoptions. They explained that decodability focuses on the word level and the use of high frequency and phonetically regular words, while predictability refers to such features as the use of rhyme, picture clues, and repeated phrases.

Engaging qualities refers to text that is interesting and exciting to the reader. Hoffman and his colleagues concluded that the copyright 2000 basals showed an increased level in the engaging quality of reading selections. A noteworthy finding was that the more the decodable the text, the lower the rating on engaging qualities.

Using the same procedure as in 1994 study, Hoffman and his colleagues analyzed the copyright 2000 basals and found that they had fewer words than the 1993 series, but still more than the 1987 series. The CIERA Text Analysis revealed that there was a move back to more controlled vocabulary in the 2000 series, but not as controlled as the 1987 series. There was also a shift in the 2000 basals to being more decodable but less predictable and less engaging at the early levels. Hoffman and his colleagues asserted that the loss of engaging qualities could affect student motivation, while the loss of predictability could affect students' reading accuracy, rate, and fluency.

2.4.2 National Reading Panel

In 1997, a congressional mandate created the National Reading Panel (NRP) to review existing research on the different approaches to teaching reading and to determine which methods were the most effective. The foundation of the work was based on Snow's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), which was a synthesis of research on reading interventions. The NRP expanded Snow's work to determine the most effective evidence-based

methods for teaching reading. An examination of available reading research published since 1966 revealed approximately 100,000 studies, causing the NRP to focus on what the panel identified as the "Big 5": (a) phonemic awareness, (b) systematic phonics, (c) vocabulary, (d) fluency, and (e) comprehension. The broad question that the panel attempted to answer was: Does instruction in any of the "Big 5" improve reading? If so, how is this instruction best provided?

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. Some of the common phonemic activities include rhyming, individual sound isolation, blending sounds together, and analyzing words into their constituent sounds. The National Reading Panel examined 52 articles analyzing phonemic awareness. The major conclusion of the meta-analysis was that the ability to manipulate the sounds in language helps students learn to read. Phonemic awareness instruction produced positive effects on both word and pseudo word reading, boosted reading comprehension, and assisted in learning how to spell. The NRP noted that acquiring phonemic awareness helped students understand and use the alphabetic code but that a focus on phonemic awareness was not sufficient for a total reading program. Phonemic awareness instruction at the kindergarten level should benefit all students, but students in first and second grade should be assessed to determine the need for such instruction. Lastly, phonemic awareness instruction should be as relevant and exciting as possible to engage students' interest and attention.

The primary focus of phonics instruction is to learn letter/sound correspondences and spelling patterns to assist in reading and spelling words. A systematic phonics program would include a planned progressive set of letter/sound correspondences and teach them explicitly systematically. Thirty-eight research studies were found that examined systematic phonics

instruction. The findings supported the conclusion that systematic phonics instruction had a bigger impact on students' growth in reading than other types of phonics instruction or no phonics at all. The biggest impact on reading is achieved when phonics instructions is introduced early, such as kindergarten and first grade. Phonics instruction was most effective in improving students' ability to decode regularly spelled words and pseudo words and in spelling. The NRP report asserted that "systematic phonics should be integrated with other reading instruction to create a balanced reading program" (NRP, 2000, p.297).

The importance of vocabulary knowledge for comprehension has long been recognized. Accomplishing the task of decoding words in a text selection can improve comprehension, but, if the word is not in the student's vocabulary, comprehension will be compromised. Therefore, the NRP did not examine vocabulary studies to determine if instruction in vocabulary had an effect on reading, but rather on how vocabulary could best be taught. The NRP examined 47 studies on assorted types of vocabulary instruction, such as explicit, indirect, and multimedia. The conclusion was that vocabulary should be taught using multiple methods with active engagement on the part of students, that is, instruction should involve direct and indirect approaches with multiple exposures and repetition. Vocabulary words should be chosen keeping in mind that the words are useful in many contexts. Finally, students may acquire vocabulary through incidental learning and the use of computer technology can be used effectively to teach it.

Fluency is the ability to read text with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. It develops from reading practice. The NRP examined 16 articles on the effectiveness of repeated oral reading instructional approaches. The NRP concluded that instruction in repeated oral reading procedures had a positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

Therefore, the NRP suggested that repeated oral reading procedures, with guidance from the teacher, should be included in a reading program.

The last component of reading instruction that the NRP examined was comprehension. The 205 studies examined led to the identification of 16 types of effective procedures for comprehension instruction. Out of the 16 procedures, the NRP determined that the following seven procedures had a solid scientific basis: (a) comprehension monitoring, when readers learn how to be aware of their developing understanding of a text they are reading; (b) cooperative learning; (c) the use of graphic and semantic organizers; (d) question answering; (e) question generating; (f) story structure, where students are taught to organize their thinking about a story by addressing who, what, when, where and why; and (g) the basic story structure of characters, setting, problem, solution, and main events. The NRP also asserted that these procedures needed to be explicitly taught and are more effective when used as a part of a multiple-strategy method.

The findings of the NRP have had a two-fold effect on governmental policy with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and Reading First. ESEA is a federally funded program passed in 1965 to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged and is now also known as No Child Left Behind. The major focus of No Child Left Behind is to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education.

Reading First was a grant program supporting low-income schools to improve early reading instruction in classrooms. The federal funds helped schools implement scientifically based reading instruction in the early grades (kindergarten to third grade) to ensure that all students could read well by the end of third grade. Both NCLB and Reading First have changed

beginning reading instruction by emphasizing the use of a balanced reading approach using only scientifically-based reading instruction, focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and the use of screening and diagnostic tools. The results of these initiatives have led to important changes in basal readers.

Since the passage of No Child Left Behind, researchers have shown some interest in the impact of policy on basal reading programs. Below are seven research studies that have explored the effects of No Child Left Behind and Reading First on basal reading programs of the early 2000s. The studies examined and compared how well the basal programs of the 2000s align with the recommendations of NCLB and Reading First, focusing on decodable text and contextualized spelling in first grade, comprehension strategies in third through fifth grade, volume of reading afforded third graders using basal programs, vocabulary instruction in kindergarten, and Florida's policy mandate on third grade retention.

In 2004, Foorman and her colleagues analyzed the decodability of selections in six first grade basal reading programs (Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, & Griffin, 2004). During the early 2000s, California and Texas mandated that texts for first graders should be 75% to 80% decodable; aligning themselves with the National Reading Panel research on beginning reading that supported the use of decodable texts. Although research supported the use of decodable texts, there was no data specifying a percentage of words that should be decodable. Foorman and her colleagues analyzed lexical and semantic features of words and the syntactic features of sentences in basal programs from 1995 to 2000. Their research was similar to research conducted by Stein and her colleagues (1999), which examined phonics instruction and decodable text, but Foorman went further by computing decodability. The analysis of

decodability took into account the regularity of spelling patterns and the "consistency of sound-spelling relations" exhibited by the words in a text (Foorman et al., 2004, p.170).

Foorman and her colleagues examined pacing, repetition, and the connection between letter/sound correspondences and sight words taught and their appearance in text selections. Words were considered "decodable now" if strategies to decode had been taught in current or prior lessons and considered "decodable later" if strategies would eventually be taught in the basal. For example, the vowel team *ai* may have been taught as the long vowel sound in *paid*, making the word *said* nondecodable, unless it had been taught as a sight word. Words were also considered decodable if they were taught holistically, such as high-frequency words and story words. Words were counted as not decodable if the strategies needed to decode them had not been taught.

Foorman and her colleagues revealed that the six programs varied in the approach they took to achieve decodability, the degree in which students would be able to access word meanings when instructional strategies had not been taught, the number of phonic elements taught, and in the care with which words were introduced that could be considered decodable.

The six programs differed substantially in the length of text selections, the number of unique and total words used in each selection, the amount of repetition, and grammatical complexity of sentences and types of vocabulary. Four programs had more unique and total words and text selections than the other two. These same programs also had 70% non-decodable words that were singletons (a word that is used only once in the story). Two programs met the 75% to 80% decodable mandate, and three programs achieved a relatively high decodable rate reached only by teaching one-third of the words holistically.

Revisiting Durkin's work (1981), McGill-Franzen and her colleagues (McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006) examined the fit between two policy mandates in Florida. Florida and Reading First mandated that high-poverty schools use only basal programs that were approved in order to receive Reading First funds. Also, a Florida statute required that third graders who were not reading on grade level be retained. McGill-Franzen and her colleagues conducted two different types of analyses on two third grade basal programs: (a) a content analysis of two basal programs, identified as program C and F, to determine how well they reflected current research in the development of comprehension, fluency, motivation, domain knowledge, vocabulary, and the instructional support needed for the lowest-achieving students, and (b) an evaluation of whether the programs properly prepared third graders for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

McGill-Franzen and her colleagues concluded that one basal program (program F) included more preparation for reading, vocabulary, and fluency while the other basal program (program C) included more comprehension study. Both programs had many reading selections that were considered to be above the reading level of struggling learners, and extra student texts that were even more difficult than the basal reading selections. The basal programs were structured for whole-class instruction while the teacher's manuals mentioned extra support for below-level readers, but little guidance was offered to vary instructional intensity, differentiate instruction, or engage struggling students. The FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) data revealed that approximately one in four Florida third graders failed the test, regardless of which program was used. In addition, the majority of the students were in high-poverty schools, demonstrating that mandated basal programs did not provide sufficient support to teachers of

low-achieving high-poverty students. McGill-Franzen and her colleagues asserted that the mandate to buy basal programs might actually be detrimental to the lowest-achieving students.

According to the National Reading Panel, effective beginning reading instruction includes explicit, systematic phonics instruction and the opportunity to practice reading with decodable text. Maslin (2007) analyzed five beginning basal reading programs from the early 2000s for readability, decodability, and phonics instruction to determine alignment with current research.

To determine readability, the author picked three passages from the basal, one each from the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The passages were analyzed using a readability formula and averaged to determine a final score. The total number of words, number of unique words, words per page, and words per sentence were also counted. The readability results indicated that one basal program followed a progression of difficulty appropriate for first grade, but that the other programs had many passages that were written at levels higher than first grade. All of the programs' passages increased in length and difficulty as the year progressed.

Decodability was measured in two ways: the texts were examined to determine wholly decodable and partially decodable words and the sequence of phonics instruction was compared to a developmentally appropriate sequence based on previous research. Maslin analyzed word samples from both the decodable books and the basal selections for decodability. Three of the programs included almost 50% wholly decodable words, while two of the programs had only 33% decodable words in their selections. Using the combination of Dolch Words, Basal Words, and Wholly Decodable Words, it was determined that all of the programs would allow students to read 75% or more of the text selections. Maslin asserted that publishers were giving students opportunities to practice decoding through their control of vocabulary.

The research-based developmental sequence of phonics instruction suggested that instruction start with initial consonants and digraphs, move to short vowels, blends, preconsonantal nasals (e.g. the nasal vowel sound in *bump* and *sink*), and then long vowels. One program followed the sequence almost exactly. Out of the five programs analyzed, four of them had a high correlation to the developmentally appropriate sequence.

Reviewing research that suggested that spelling should be embedded in reading instruction, Cooke and her colleagues (Cooke, Slee, & Young, 2008) investigated the extent to which contextualized spelling was used to support reading in first grade. They analyzed 75 lessons across five basal reading programs (copyright 2002-2004), focusing on seven opportunities where spelling might support reading. These seven opportunities were: (a) practice of sound-to-symbol relationships, (b) using letters for phoneme segmentation exercises, (c) during word-level reading practice, regular word patterns are spelled, (d) during word-level reading practice, irregular words are spelled, (e) during the story reading activity, regular words are spelled, (f) during the story reading activity, irregular words are spelled, and (g) during spelling lesson activities, students read their spelling words.

Cooke and her colleagues revealed that teachers frequently were instructed to show students a grapheme and ask them the sound, practicing sound-to-symbol relationships, but not the inverse, where teachers provide the sound, requiring the children to identify the grapheme. Only two programs used letter tiles for phoneme segmentation to build and blend words, and this only occurred in the first week of the program. Four out of the five programs used spelling in activities to practice regular word patterns and only three programs used spelling in activities to practice irregular words. There was one example where spelling was an activity used for decodable words during story reading, but no examples of spelling used for irregular words

during story reading. Lastly, four of the programs inconsistently incorporated reading of spelling words during spelling lessons. Cooke and her colleagues concluded that there was some integration between spelling and reading in all programs evaluated, but, overall, contextualized spelling was not a consistent feature of reading lessons

The National Reading Panel recommended that effective comprehension instruction should include a direct explanation of a comprehension strategy followed by teacher modeling, using a think aloud, and then guided practice with a gradual release of responsibility by the teacher. Based on the recommendations by the NRP and Durkin's research (1981), Dewitz and his colleagues (Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy, 2009) examined five widely used third, fourth and, fifth grade basal programs from 2005. The four questions that Dewitz and his colleagues attempted to answer were: (a) what skills and strategies do the core reading programs teach and how do they align with the recommendations of research? (b) how are teachers instructed to teach the skills? (c) is a gradual release model used? and, (d) is there enough practice over a period of time?

Examining the scope and sequences of the basal programs, Dewitz and his colleagues discovered that the five basal programs did not align with the research. The basal reading programs covered more skills and strategies than the seven strategies of comprehension monitoring, cooperative learning, using organizers, question answering, question generation and summarization recommended by the National Reading Panel. The basal programs ranged from 18 to 29 skills and strategies per program per year, which meant that the skills received superficial treatment. The skills and strategies were parsed into smaller components instead of being taught as one concept. For example, the basal might teach main idea separately from teaching details that support the main idea. Or the same skill would be taught under multiple labels, such as inferencing, drawing conclusions, and making generalizations.

According to the NRP, effective comprehension instruction begins with direct explanation of the strategy and its purpose. All of the programs provided direct explanations, but Dewitz and his colleagues asserted that in many cases the instructions were not as explicit as research recommended. There was a difference among the five programs in the amount of modeling provided for the students, from 2% to 8%, with most of it taking place when the strategy was first introduced. Also, the amount of guided practice among the five programs varied from 3% to 18%.

All of the programs provided direct explanations, but Dewitz and his colleagues asserted that in many cases the instructions were not as explicit as the research recommended. All of the programs included modeling by the teacher, but not by the students. Dewitz and his colleagues concluded that the gradual release model was not employed in the core reading programs with any consistency and that the programs lacked guided practice. Lastly, the core programs lacked the intensity in instruction that the National Reading Panel research recommended. The authors asserted that "core programs need to provide a clearer rationale for what is taught, when it is taught, how it will be taught, and how often it will be reviewed" (Dewitz et al., 2009, p. 122).

Brenner and Hiebert (2010) wanted to find out the actual number of words, or volume of reading, provided in third-grade basal programs. When working with Reading First schools, Brenner and Hiebert suggested ways for teachers to increase students' opportunity to read connected text. The teachers' response was that they could not deviate from the directions in the core reading program, according to the Reading First mandates. This led to the researchers to analyze six Reading First-approved, (copyright 2002-2004) third-grade basal programs for: (a) the volume of words provided in the core student texts, (b) the amount of words and minutes students read if their teachers followed the guidance in the teacher's edition, (c) differentiation of

text for students at different proficiency levels- both in terms of the difficulty of the text and also in terms of the amount of reading, and (d) the instructional contexts in which the reading was to occur.

Four of the core reading programs provided an average of 3,100 words for students to read for a week-long lesson, allowing for 6 to 10 minutes of daily reading. In a 90-minute reading block, students would be reading on average 17% of the time. There was no differentiation for students at different proficiency levels, but advanced readers might actually read a greater number of words when independent reading was factored in. Brenner and Hiebert concluded that it was impossible to determine the contexts of reading. There were no indications in the suggested lesson planner if the story was to be listened to, read as a whole group, individually, or otherwise. Brenner and Hiebert concluded that the volume of reading an average student may read was 15 minutes, with struggling readers reading less. Brenner and Hiebert asserted that students, especially in the bottom quartile, need to read a greater volume of text and the current basal reading programs were not designed to do that job.

According to Wright and Neuman (2013), research has shown that vocabulary knowledge influences comprehension, yet, there is little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in school curricula. Wright and Neuman examined the extent to which core reading materials from the four most widely used basal programs support vocabulary development in kindergarten. They analyzed 12 weeks of instruction from the middle of the school year, focusing on three features of vocabulary instruction: (a) how many words were taught each week, (b) how words were selected for instruction, insuring that they are appropriately challenging, and (c) how words were taught.

Using the weekly scope and sequence for vocabulary instruction, Wright and Neuman identified a corpus of words for each program. Target words to be taught each week ranged from two words in program C to more than twenty words in program A, with the number of target words per week within the programs varying by as much as 10 words. Thus, the results indicated a wide disparity on the number of words taught each week in the core reading programs.

None of the programs explicitly explained how vocabulary words were selected; therefore, Wright and Neuman tried to determine the programs' organization. They analyzed the types of words selected, such as nouns or adjectives, examined whether the words were found in stories that were read aloud to the students, and if the words were presented in conceptually related clusters. The results indicated that there was no apparent pattern regarding parts of speech in the selection of vocabulary words. For example, Program A and B focused on nouns, Curriculum D emphasized adjectives, and Curriculum C appeared to have more of a balance of words from different parts of speech. Curricula A, C, and D chose fewer than a third of the vocabulary words from the read aloud text, while Curriculum B selected words solely from the stories students read themselves. There was also little evidence of conceptual related clusters, with only Curriculum B regularly presenting words that were related to each other, such as *stem, leaf, root* and *plant.*

Along with analyzing how words were selected, Wright and Neuman examined the difficulty of the words chosen for instruction. Three different sources were used to determine word difficulty: (a) the Dale-Chall list, a list of approximately 8,000 common words known by fourth graders; (b) Words Worth Teaching list, a list of words categorized into four groups: easy, known by most children by the end of second grade; words to teach before second grade; words

to teach before sixth grade; and difficult words; and (c) tier words developed by Beck and her colleagues: tier 1 words are basic words such as *baby* and *happy*, tier 2 words are words used by mature language users in a variety of contexts, such as *coincidence* and *absurd*, and tier 3 words are content-specific words such as *volcano* and *refinery*. The results revealed that many of the words selected for teaching were easy, basic words that did not need instructional attention. When the easy words were excluded, there was still a wide variability with Curriculum A teaching more than eight sophisticated words per week to only one sophisticated word per week taught in Curriculum C and D.

The last feature of vocabulary instruction that Wright and Neuman analyzed was the instructional regime, or set of procedures used to engage students in learning words. The three areas examined were: (a) the instructional practices to teach word meanings, (b) practice, review and progress monitoring of words, and (C) how well the programs followed systematic instruction. The instructional practices used most frequently in all of the reading programs to teach word meanings were the use of definitions and verbal demonstrations. However, Curriculum C used both of these strategies more consistently than the other programs. In addition, occasionally nonverbal instructional practices, such as the use of a picture, were used to teach words. Curriculum B used nonverbal instructional practices for approximately one-third of the words, while the other programs relied on pictures less frequently. A second instructional practice that was examined was the varying of intensity of instruction given to challenging words compared to more common words. Only Curriculum B provided more instructional practices for challenging words, while the other three programs recommended a set of practices regardless of word difficulty.

Practice, review, and progress monitoring assist in promoting word retention. Therefore, Wright and Neuman analyzed the programs to determine the extent of the use of these strategies and the variability according to word difficulty. All of the program's instructional practices included practice and review, with slightly more practice and review for more challenging words, but only Curriculum B included progress monitoring.

Research suggests (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009) that an instructional regime to teach words should include a systematic pattern of: (a) identification of words for instruction, (b) explicit explanations to provide background knowledge and understanding of words, (c) opportunities for children to practice using words in multiple contexts, (d) review of word meanings, and (e) progress monitoring. Wright and Neuman analyzed the programs to determine how well the programs followed the above sequence. They revealed that all of the programs identified target words and in most cases provided explicit explanations. Opportunities for practice were also prevalent in all of the programs. Review of words and instructional guidance for review was minimal in all programs and only one program, Curriculum B addressed progress monitoring.

Wright and Neuman concluded that the programs differed greatly in the number of words introduced, how words were selected, their use of instructional practices and the use of systematic instruction. Across all programs the words chosen were not challenging and none adequately measured students' progress to determine whether words were retained. Finally, the results indicated that the core reading programs did not provide vocabulary instruction as recommended by current research and the National Reading Panel.

2.4.3 Response to Intervention

Up until 2004, struggling students had to have a significant discrepancy between their IQ and achievement to be identified as having learning disabilities. With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA; P.L 108-446), the process changed. IDEA states that a school shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between IQ and achievement, and they may use a process that determines if a child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of the evaluation procedure. Thus, Response to Intervention (RTI) emerged as an alternative to the traditional assessment approach in the hope that intervention will occur in a timelier fashion, and that there will be a decrease in the number of students identified as disabled because of poor instruction.

RTI is a multi-step approach to early identification and support of students. The first step, Tier 1, is to provide high-quality instruction and universal screening for all students. In Tier 2 struggling students are provided with targeted interventions at increasing levels of intensity. Progress is monitored through assessments and screening tools, such as DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills) and instruction is adjusted as needed. If students continue to show little progress they are placed in Tier 3 where they received individualized, intensive interventions that target the deficit skills. If, after a set amount of time, a student is still not making adequate progress then an evaluation for special education occurs.

Since the inception of RTI, a wide variety of intervention programs have flooded the marketplace. Murray and her colleagues (2014) investigated two reading intervention programs for struggling readers, comparing them at the word level, text level, and program level. Word-level features included decodability, highly frequent words, word concreteness (does the word

create an image), and multisyllabic words. Text-level features refer to how often words repeat within a text or across the levels. The program level feature focused on the match between the phonics instruction and the words in the student texts, or lesson-to-text match (LTTM). The study analyzed two first-grade intervention programs, *Leveled Literacy Intervention* by Fountas and Pinnell (2008) and *My Sidewalks on Reading Street* by Juel and colleagues (2008). The initial review of the programs revealed that both featured phonics lessons, but one program's texts featured many phonetically regular words (decodable) while the other program used leveled books. Leveled books are texts leveled according to difficulty based on multiple supportive features of the whole text. The supportive features include items such as the length of the book, number of pages, number of words per sentence, the size of the font used, types of words (high-frequency, regular or irregular spelling, multisyllabic), the use of illustrations, and literary features such as the complexity of the characters, the setting and the plot.

According to connectionist model researchers, word-level features, such as phonological, orthographical, and semantic characteristics, and frequency, familiarity, and imageability are important in determining readability. In this study, Murray and her colleagues studied word decodability, highly frequent words, word concreteness and multisyllable words. To analyze the four areas, all words from the student texts were entered into a computer program and then sorted into 10 levels for each group. The total number of words was established at each level, including total unique words, total multisyllable and singleton words. To obtain the percentages of words that were phonetically regular, highly frequent, and concrete, Murray and her colleagues then used the Text Analysis: Beginning Books digital program. The results indicated that the average percentages of concrete words were similar in both programs, and both programs featured texts with more than 50% of the words in the highly frequent category. The

average percentage of phonetically regular words were higher in the program using decodable texts (62% compared to 42%) while the program with leveled texts featured a much higher average percentage of multisyllable words (23% compared to 11%).

Text-level features are also important in the design of texts for struggling readers. The deliberate pacing and repetition of words can maximize learning. Text-level features relate to how often words repeat (type-token ratio) or appear only once. To determine text-level percentages for the repetition of words, the total number of singletons was divided by the total number of unique words. The overall mean percentages of singletons in each level were similar (45% for the leveled program compared to 41% for the decodable program). With respect to repetition of words, the decodable program contained slightly less word repetition.

According to Murray and her colleagues, matching content of phonics instruction and the words in student's texts has been a focus since the 1960s and Chall's reviews. The lesson-to-text match (LTTM) percentage for the decodable text program approached 70%, while the leveled text program averaged 31%. Murray and her colleagues found that the leveled text program was aligned with the meaning-emphasis philosophy and the decodable text program aligned with a code-emphasis philosophy.

Through the findings of this study, Murray and her colleagues pointed out the pros and cons to each type of program. Using the leveled texts may help develop sight word vocabulary and provide success for readers that are at the pre-alphabetic stage due to the large amount of multisyllabic words. Conversely, leveled texts may encourage guessing at words or an overreliance on picture clues. In addition, due to the low percentage of phonetically regular words, decoding strategies may not be used and a high percentage of singletons may cause difficulty for the struggling reader.

Using decodables may provide the development of sight words, and since the percentages of phonetically regular words and the lesson-to-text-match is high, the use of decoding strategies may be used. The disadvantage of using decodables is that beginning readers may not have enough word repetition to develop a sight word vocabulary.

In conclusion, Murray and her colleagues suggested that "gaining knowledge of the differences and similarities in these programs can launch additional research to clarify their impact on at-risk readers, as well as research on how to better design effective interventions" (Murray, Munger, & Hiebert, 2014, p. 492).

2.4.4 Common Core State Standards Initiative

In 2010, a state-led initiative coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), along with parents, educators, and community leaders, building upon the strengths of current state standards, developed a set of common core state standards to be adopted by all states to ensure consistency from school to school and state to state. The initiative was called the Common Core State Standards Initiative with the standards known simply as the Common Core State Standards or Common Core Standards. These standards focused on "core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades" (CCSSI, 2011) and advanced to standards for college and career-readiness. The standards defined what all students are expected to know at the end of each grade level. The CCSS provided a continuum of knowledge and skills, increasing in complexity, which students should attain within their K-12 school years, with the final goal of preparing students for college and the workforce. These Core Standards

have been adopted by 48 states and are currently being implemented in schools (Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI], 2011).

In developing the standards one of the goals was to produce "fewer, clearer and higher standards" (CCSSI, 2011). Therefore, only areas that were seen as critical for student success in college and a career were included in the standards. These decisions were driven by research and the best elements of existing standards work. Another goal of the CCSSI was to set criteria for publishers and curriculum developers to use in developing textbooks to ensure alignment of materials with the standards. An assessment system is currently being designed to measure student performance of the standards (PARCC, 2014).

The English Language Arts standards that focused on beginning reading instruction in grades K-3 included literature, informational text, and foundational skills. Literature and informational text standards focused on reading skills related to comprehension in four areas: key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and level of text complexity. The foundational skills for K-3 are components of a comprehensive reading program that focused on print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency. These are viewed as the necessary foundation to help develop proficient readers.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative recognized that students must be able to read increasingly complex literature and informational texts to meet the demands of college and future career options. These demands were addressed by the standards set for literature and informational text. An important aspect of the Common Core State Standards was the emphasis on increased text complexity across all grades. According to the CCSSI, research indicated that the complexity of text at the college level has at least held steady over the last fifty years, yet the

difficulty of K-12 texts has actually decreased. In addition, the CCSSI expressed concern that students have not been expected to independently read complex texts, especially informational texts. Therefore, the Common Core State Standards stressed the importance of ensuring that students read increasingly complex text throughout their school years to ensure that they will be able to read college-level materials.

The CCSS represents a unique development in policy development and publishing. In addition to preparing the standards, the CCSSI also prepared a document specifically for publishers of reading materials. That document, *Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades K-2*, (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) is to guide publishers to ensure alignment of materials with the Standards.

Since the adoption of the Common Core Standards, there have been a number of analyses completed on text complexity. Stevens and his colleagues (2015) investigated the changes in cognitive demands of reading text for third and sixth grade from 1910 to 2000. Specifically, reading texts and reading comprehension tasks were analyzed. The textbook samples chosen were from three widely used basal reading series, which included 54 textbooks in third grade and 27 textbooks in sixth grade. Third grade was chosen because it is a critical year in developing student comprehension, while the authors believed that the sixth grade texts might provide information about demands in content area reading. The textbooks were scanned and digitized and grouped into 10 time periods, each period covering one decade. Eight stories from each textbook were sampled, the first four stories and the middle four stories.

The first part of the analysis examined text difficulty, which included lexical sophistication, lexical diversity, and syntactic complexity. A word was considered sophisticated if it was not among the 2,000 most frequent words found in the American National Corpus

(Reppen & Ide, 2004). Sophisticated word ratio (proportion of sophisticated words in a text) and sophisticated word type ratio (proportion of unique words in a text that are sophisticated) were both analyzed. Lexical diversity was measured by calculating the type-token ratio (TTR), the ratio number of unique words to total number of words in a text. Syntactic complexity was measured by calculating the proportion of complex sentences to the mean developmental level of the texts as indicated by the developmental level scores (D-Level). The developmental level score is based on child language acquisition research and levels sentences on an 8-point scale based on sentence structure.

The second part of the analysis examined the cognitive demands of comprehension tasks. According to Stevens and his colleagues, the amount of text and the type of processing of the text have an impact on the cognitive complexity of a task. There were three areas that were analyzed: working memory load, processing complexity, and level of ideas assessed. Working memory load is the number of ideas a reader must hold in memory to be able to respond to the comprehension task. To assess the working memory load, the information needed to answer the question and the extra information found in the portion of the text the readers were asked to process for the comprehension task was measured.

Processing complexity refers to the amount of connections between different pieces of information needed to complete a task. These connections may be between the text and prior knowledge, different segments of the text, or information stored in long-term memory. Thus, the questions were categorized into 21 types. Some of the types were explicit detail, assessing prior knowledge, prediction, compare and contrast, main idea, summarization, sequence of events, and figurative language.

The third area assessed was the level of ideas of the comprehension questions. High-level ideas demand an understanding of ideas across multiple sentences and require deeper processing, while low-level ideas require the understanding of a single sentence or clause.

The results of the analysis for third grade texts showed that the lexical sophistication decreased from the 1910s through the 1940s, with a rising trend from the 1950s onwards. Selections in the editions of the 2000s had a significantly higher ratio of sophisticated words in the text than all other decades. The type token ratio measuring lexical diversity showed that the selections in the 1910s had a significantly higher ratio than all other decades. Between the 1940s and 1970s, the ratio remained low and stable and increased steadily since the 1980s. The last text difficulty measure, syntactic complexity, showed that the proportion of complex sentences in the 1910 selections had a significantly higher ratio than all other decades. The proportion of complex sentences dropped in the 1950s and stayed low and stable through the 2000s. Meanwhile, the D-Level score (child language acquisition) was significantly higher in the 1910s through 1920s then the 1940s through 2000s, with no significant differences found between the 1940s and 2000s.

The results for third grade comprehension tasks showed that the average number of comprehension questions asked continuously increased from 1920s (16 questions) up to the 2000s (48 questions). The average amount of information needed to answer a comprehension question dipped from 1920s to 1930s, with students being required to process an average of 25 content words to answer a comprehension question. The number of content words began to rise in the 1970s until the 2000s. The 2000 edition required nearly double the number of content words to answer a question to an average of 49 content words. There was no strong pattern in the amount of extraneous information involved in student's processing of text to respond to

comprehension questions. Explicit detail questions were the most frequently asked throughout all of the editions and across all of the decades. An average of one-third of all questions from the 1920s through 1950s were explicit detail questions. There was a decline in such questions throughout the latter half of the century to an average of 10% of all questions in the 2000 edition. There were no apparent trends in the emphasis of other types of comprehension questions over time, but there was an increase in the percentage of higher-level questions. In the earlier editions around one-third of the comprehension questions were higher-level, while the 1990 and 2000 editions had nearly 50% higher-level questions.

The results of the sixth-grade text analysis showed that the lexical sophistication of selections in 1910s and 1920s had the highest ratio of sophisticated words, while the ratio of the selections in the 2000s were significantly lower than the 1920s. The type token ratio measuring lexical diversity showed that the 1910s had a significantly higher ratio than the 1940s through 1990s; however, there was a significant increase in the type token ratio in the 2000s. The last text difficulty measure, syntactic complexity, showed that the proportion of complex sentences was significantly higher in the 1910s than the 1950s through 2000s, where the proportion of complex sentences stayed low and stable with no significant change. The D-Level score (child language acquisition) was significantly higher in the 1910s through the 1930s than the 1940s through 2000s.

The analysis of sixth grade comprehension tasks showed that the average number of comprehension questions asked were similar to third grade. In 1920, there were an average of 14 questions per story increasing to 36 questions per story in 2000. The average amount of information needed to answer a comprehension question showed an increase from a low of 32 content words in 1930s to a high of 69 content words in 2000s. As found in the third-grade texts,

there was no strong pattern in the amount of extraneous information involved in student's processing of text to respond to comprehension questions in sixth grade. The pattern for explicit detail questions was also similar to third grade. An average of 49% of all questions in the 1920s addressed explicit details, diminishing to less than 10% of all comprehensions question in the 1990s and 2000s. There were no apparent trends in the emphasis of other types of comprehension questions over time, although inferential questions seemed to be more frequently used since the 1960s. There was an increase in the percentage of higher-level questions in the sixth-grade editions. In 1930s, there was an average of 11 percent of higher-level questions, which increased to 49 percent in the 1990s and 2000s.

In conclusion, at the third-grade level, there has been a consistent pattern of increasing cognitive demands in comprehension tasks from 1960s through 2000s. Thus, comprehension questions in recent editions were more demanding cognitively, requiring more textual information to construct an answer. The types of questions also increased in complexity, with a decline in explicit detail questions and an increase of higher-level questions. Although, higher-level and lower-level comprehension questions have been fairly balanced in the past 30 years.

At the sixth-grade level, the analysis showed that the cognitive demands have been fairly stable since 1950. The analysis of comprehension tasks showed the same gradual increase across the decades as third grade, with the cognitive demand of questions doubling in the latter part of the century. There was a declining emphasis on explicit detail questions and an increasing emphasis on higher-level questions, with a corresponding increase in the cognitive demand placed on students.

Stevens and his colleagues assert that since the increase in cognitive demands is greater in third grade than in sixth grade, future research is needed to determine if there are declining

cognitive demands in the secondary curricula. There should also be research on the effects of the steady increase in the number of questions asked per story.

Although this study is not directly related to the focus of the present investigation, it is indicative of an important emphasis on complexity in research about basal reading programs. The next two studies are more directly related to beginning reading resources.

Fitzgerald and her colleagues (2015) analyzed the text complexity shifts across the past six decades for one basal program publisher, Scott Foresman. The three main research questions guiding the study were: (a) Did overall text complexity levels shift across the seven program years?, (b) Did the progression of text-characteristic complexity from the beginning to the end of the first-grade year vary across program years?, and (c) did text characteristic levels vary as a function of program year? The first-grade anthologies from 1962, 1971, 1983, 1993, 2000, 2007, and 2013 were scanned and digitized into ten equal sections for each year. Overall Text Complexity and nine text characteristics were analyzed using computer-based programs that made use of multilevel models.

The results showed that total number of words students were exposed to across the years varied considerably. The lowest number of new words occurred in the 1971 program (8,371), while the highest number of new words occurred in the 1983 program (30,251). The 1962 program had the fewest unique words (431), while the 2007 and 2013 programs had the most unique words (1,670). The number of new words introduced also differed across the program years. There were a very small number of new words introduced early in the 1962 program (67), gradually increasing to the end of the year (272). The 2007 and 2014 programs began the year with approximately 4 times the number of new words than the 1962 program (279 and 239), and almost doubled the number (549 and 474) by the end of the year.

The analysis showed a significant increase in Overall Text Complexity across the years as measured by Lexiles. The text complexity level increased dramatically by approximately 170L from 1962 to 2013. There was also a marked decrease in numbers of repetitions of words in selections across the years.

Fitzgerald and colleagues concluded that since present-day first-grade students were facing more demands than ever in basal reading programs, a concerted effort must be made to supplement these programs "with texts that provide considerable repetition of word meanings, sight words, and core orthographic patterns" (Fitzgerald, Elmore, Relyea, Hiebert, & Stenner, 2015, p. 75). Also, a particular concern is the demand placed on struggling readers and English language learners.

Finally, like Fitzgerald, Hiebert (2015) analyzed the Scott Foresman basal programs across the past 50 years. Her focus was on the major turning points in beginning reading instruction. Four editions that were watersheds in beginning reading texts were chosen: 1962, 1993, 2000, and 2008 and 2013. The 1962 edition stressed the repetition of high-frequency words, while the 1993 edition reflected the whole language movement. The emergence of decodable texts and a strong phonics emphasis was reflected in the 2000 edition. The 2008 edition showed changes in expectations about literacy instruction, and 2013 begins the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Focusing on three assumptions – (a) earlier is better, (b) word repetition is not a factor, and (c) one size fits all, Hiebert examined the anthologies using cognitive load and linguistic content indices. The cognitive load indices were (a) the number of unique words compared to total words in a text, and (b) the number of words that appear only once in the text. The linguistic content indices were (a) the word frequency (percentage of words that are among the

300 most frequently used), and (b) grapho-phonic complexity (percentage of words containing simple vowel patterns).

Hiebert found that the 1962 edition repeated a core group of high frequency words, with 50% of the words found in the list of 300 most frequent words. Ten new words were introduced for every 100 words, which means that most words were repeated at least 10 times and no word appeared only once.

The 1993 edition used a predictable text structure, but introduced words at a higher rate. Twenty-nine new words were introduced for every 100, but 46% of the words appeared only a single time.

The state textbook adoption committees of California and Texas in the late 1990s mandated an increase in phonics instruction and decodable texts, causing a slight shift in beginning texts. The percentage of phonetically regular words increased from 24% in 1993 to 42% in 2000, but the number of different words, the percentage of single-appearing words, and the number of unique words compared to total words did not change from the 1993 edition.

The 2008 edition retained decodable words with a similar rate of introduction as the 2000 edition, but the crucial change was when students were asked to read the first texts. With the adoption of No Child Left Behind (2002), formal reading instruction in the basal programs was pushed down to kindergarten. Thus, by the end of kindergarten, the texts were highly decodable, with 80% of the words containing simple vowel patterns.

The 2013 editions, which follow the adoption of the CCSS, show that expectations are slightly higher at the end of first grade, with no substantial difference in kindergarten compared to the 2008 edition.

Hiebert discussed her findings in the context of the three assumptions that currently shape reading instruction in basal reading programs: (a) earlier is better, (b) word repetition is not a factor in learning to read, and (c) one size fits all.

Children need to have many rich literacy experiences with activities such as listening to books, playing with puppets, manipulating magnets, and scribbling and drawing before being ready for formal reading instruction. These are the types of activities that used to be associated with kindergarten. Thus, Hiebert is concerned that, by moving reading instruction down to kindergarten, children who have not had many literacy experiences before entering kindergarten have a greater challenge.

Currently, there is little attention paid to repetition of vocabulary in beginning texts. Hiebert maintains that beginning readers do require repetition of words, but research needs to focus on what levels of repetition are required for different types of words.

Finally, the current assumption is that "one size fits all." The idea that all students should read the same text at the same time, or, if easier material is given to lower-performing students, expectations are lowered. Hiebert points out that the existing research shows that comprehension suffers when texts are too hard.

To ensure the reading success of students who rely on high-quality texts and instruction, Hiebert concludes that research is needed to develop texts that integrate high-frequency words, phonetically regular words, and texts that are meaningful or engaging. This conclusion is quite congruent with Fitzgerald's conclusion.

2.5 SUMMARY

Analyses of basal reading programs reveal a gap between research and resources. While systematic phonics instruction has been demonstrated to support beginning readers (Chall, 1967; Bond and Dykstra, 1967; Adams, 1990; National Reading Panel, 2000) such instruction was not provided in the basals analyzed by Beck and McCaslin (1978), Beck and Block (1979), Stein, Johnson, and Gutlohn, 1999). Likewise, opportunities for students to apply the phonics they are learning to words in texts they are reading have not been consistently provided as demonstrated by the analyses of first grade basals conducted by Hoffman and his colleagues (1994, 2002), Foorman and her colleagues (2004) and Maslin (2007).

Studies by Hoffman and colleagues (1994, 2002), McGill-Franzen and colleagues (2006), and Brenner and Hiebert (2010) focused on the impact of policy on basal development. These studies demonstrated that policy dictates the content of basal programs, but the final basal product may have an adverse effect on the lowest achieving student.

Studies by Beck, McKeown, McCaslin and Burkes (1979), Durkin (1981), and Dewitz and Leahy (2009) focused on comprehension instruction. Up until the late 1970's, very little research had been conducted on comprehension instruction. Beck and her colleague's research in comprehension instruction were used for empirical investigation to improve comprehension instructional practices. Since then, though, Durkin (1981) and Dewitz (2009) revealed, that the basal programs still did not align with the research and did not deliver direct, explicit instruction.

Examining spelling instruction in first grade basals Cooke and her colleagues (2008) investigated the extent to which contextualized spelling was used to support reading. Their study revealed that contextualized spelling was not a consistent feature of reading lessons.

Wright and Newman (2013) focused on vocabulary instruction in kindergarten. Research has shown that vocabulary knowledge influences comprehension and instruction should be a systematic instructional practice of identifying words for instruction, use explicit explanations, and include opportunities for practicing, review and progress monitoring of the words. Their study revealed that the vocabulary words chosen were not challenging and none of the programs followed the recommendations of systematic instruction.

Murray and her colleagues (2014) focused on the type of texts used in two reading intervention programs. Both programs taught phonics, but one program employed leveled texts while the other made use of decodable text. Their study revealed that much more research must be under taken on the comparison of intervention programs, research to isolate the effects of decodable and leveled texts, and research comparing the effectiveness of intervention programs.

With the implementation of Common Core State Standards, researchers have begun to look at the difficulty levels of texts. Stevens and his colleagues (2015) focused on changes in cognitive demands of reading texts in 3rd and 6th grade over the past century. The results show the cognitive demands of 3rd grade reading texts have increased, while the cognitive demands of 6th grade reading texts have been stable. Fitzgerald and her colleagues (2015) analyzed one publisher's first grade basal program across 60 years, focusing on seven program years. The findings were that there was an increase in overall text complexity with less repetition of words. Hiebert (2015) focused on the changes of text complexity across 50 years of one publisher, focusing on 4 watershed years. Her conclusion was that texts that integrate high-frequency words, phonetically regular words, and that are meaningful or engaging need to be developed

Most of the eighteen studies reviewed here attempted to provide detailed analyses across several basal or reading intervention programs revealing some general patterns but also a wide

variability in content and instructional approaches. The variability makes it difficult to see how basal resources have evolved in response to specific research and policy developments. The current study is an attempt to analyze one publishing company's basal program in order to trace more specifically the interaction of research, policy, and publication. This study will complement and extend the studies summarized here and will provide a longitudinal perspective on the development of basal reading resources and how research and policy has influenced that development.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the first-grade resources of one basal reading program from 1996 to 2014. In this section, I discuss the materials to be analyzed, the phases of data collection, and the plan for data analysis. The research questions guiding this investigation are:

1. How have the content, resources, and instructional approaches in the first-grade materials offered by a basal reading publisher changed over time from 1996 to 2014?
2. What do the changes in content, resources, and instructional approaches suggest about the influence of research and policy?

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

According to Bowen (2009), "Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents…" (p. 1). The data is examined and interpreted in order to gain meaning and understanding. Bowen lists five functions of documents in research: provide background information and historical insight; raise questions that need to be asked; provide supplementary

research data; provide a means of tracking change and development; and a way to verify findings or evidence from other sources. This present study analyzes documents to provide historical information on reading policy and provide an insight to the content of basal readers. The review of the literature was used as a basis to develop the questions to be asked, and the analysis of the seven basal reading series from Harcourt will be used to track the changes of the basals against the historical information on reading policy. Document analysis is often used with other methods to triangulate the data to assist in the credibility of the study and reduce biases.

This study will also use a content analysis design frame. A broad definition of content analysis is "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, p.14). In this study, the message characteristics are the basal readers. Neuendorf (2002) outlined a nine-step process as a guide when using content analysis: (a) theory and rationale, (b) conceptualization, (c) measures, (d) sampling, (e) coding schemes, (f) coding, (g) training and pilot reliability, (8) final reliability, and (9) tabulation and reporting. The introduction included the discussion of the theory, rationale, and conceptualization of this study (a and b). In the sections that follow the other aspects of Neuendorf's process guide are addressed.

The unit of analysis to be studied is first grade teaching manuals of the Harcourt reading series from 1996 to 2014. The study encompasses analyzing the first teacher's manual used in each series. The coding scheme includes the use of matrices, while the coding process included counting the number of words and sentences in a story, the number of vocabulary introduced, the amount of decodable words and sight words, and the percentage of pages devoted to phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and writing. The matrices also required entering general information about the teacher's manual. The coding was performed by the

author and a teacher colleague. The author initially coded the manuals and created templates for the colleague to use for the recoding. We met multiple times to review our work and discuss any problems. The colleague recoded 50% of the manuals and the data was then compared to the initial coding performed by the author.

3.3 SAMPLE

Reading instruction and the basal readers designed to provide that instruction have shifted a number of times since the 1960s and the publication of Jeanne Chall's *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967). Chall emphasized the importance of phonics and a strong foundation of letter/sound knowledge as a foundation for learning to read. That emphasis changed in the late 1970s, with the whole language movement, which focused on literature-based materials and an emphasis on comprehension. By 1995, whole language "had become the conventional wisdom" (Pearson, 2000, p. 219). That emphasis shifted once again with the creation of the National Reading Panel in 1997 and the 2001 implementation of No Child Left Behind. The National Reading Panel emphasized the use of a balanced reading approach using only scientifically-based reading instruction, focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. With the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 2004, Response to Intervention (RTI) became a popular alternative to the traditional assessment approach for identifying students with disabilities. In 2010, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) developed standards to provide a continuum of knowledge and skills that increase in complexity from kindergarten through 12th grade. The research from the NRP and the No Child Left Behind policy was used as the basis for the Common Core. In addition, the

CCSSI set criteria for publishers and curriculum developers to use in developing textbooks to ensure alignment of materials with the standards.

In the present study, the basal readers published by Harcourt from 1996 through 2014 are the focus of attention. Harcourt publishing was chosen because it is a top-selling program and was used in the district in which I teach. I chose to begin with the 1996 edition because it was published during the time that whole language was considered the standard method of reading instruction. The 2001, 2003, 2009 and 2012 editions were published during the time that the influence of whole language was challenged and the No Child Left Behind policy was in effect. The 2014 edition is the first Harcourt basal to be fully aligned with the Common Core standards. In addition to whole group teaching, the 2014 edition offers options for three different levels of small group instruction, following the criteria of RTI.

The basal reading series published by Harcourt from 1996 through 2014 include the following: *Treasury of Literature* (1996), *Signatures* (1999), *Collections* (2001), *Trophies* (2003), *Story Town* (2009), *Journeys* (2012), and *Journeys-Common Core* (2014). The instructional resources to be used at the beginning of first grade for each of these series comprise the sample for the study. Those resources are explained in the teacher's editions, which include reproductions of the stories in the student readers as well as references to supplementary materials, such as workbooks, word cards, and assessments.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

I developed a set of tools to collect and organize information about the sample. These tools are eight matrices which include the following: (a) analysis of research and policy context, (b) analysis of teacher's edition, (c) analysis of student reader: selection level, (d) analysis of student reader: word level, (e) analysis of instructional approaches for phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling, (f) analysis of vocabulary selection and instructional approaches, (g) analysis of instructional approaches for comprehension, (h) analysis of supplemental resources.

A display is a "visual format that presents information systematically, so the user can draw valid conclusions and take needed action" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 108). Matrices have become commonly used in qualitative research for analyzing and understanding data. In the sections that follow, I describe each matrix.

3.4.1 Analysis of Teacher's Edition

The Analysis of Teacher's Edition matrix is a tool for collecting information about the number of pages that deal with phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing. These seven topics are those identified by the National Reading Panel (2000).

The matrix for analyzing the teacher's editions provides an indication of the relative attention given to specific instructional topics over time. A subsequent matrix organizes information related to the instructional approaches related to these topics.

Table 3.A ***Matrix for Analysis of Number and Percentage of Pages in Teacher's Edition for Specific Topics***

Series title/ copyright	Review from Kinder-garten	Number and Percentage of Pages in Teacher's Edition							
		Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Spelling	Fluency	Compre-hension	Vocabulary	Writing	Other
Treasury of Literature 1996									
Signatures 1999									
Collections 2001									
Trophies 2003									
Story Town 2009									
Journeys 2012									
Journeys Common Core 2014									

3.4.2 Analysis of Research and Policy Context

The Analysis of Research and Policy Context matrix organizes information about the research and policy of each series over time. In addition, the matrix organizes information on the topics emphasized in the front matter and the authorship of each reading series.

The matrix for analysis of research and policy context provides an indication of the changes in policy, authorship and focus of topics over time.

Table 3.B ***Matrix for Analysis of Research, Policy, Context and Authorship Sample***

Series title/copyright	Research/Policy Context	Authorship	Topics Emphasized in Frontmatter
Treasury of Literature 1996			
Signatures 1999			
Collections 2001			
Trophies 2003			
Story Town 2009			
Journeys 2012			
Journeys-Common Core 2014			

3.4.3 Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling

The Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling matrix organizes information related to phonemic awareness instruction, the letter/sound correspondence sequence, instructional strategies for phonics instruction, word selected for spelling instruction, and types of spelling activities employed. In addition, information about reviewing instruction provided in kindergarten related to these topics is included.

None of the studies previously described analyzed basal programs for their kindergarten review or phonemic awareness instruction, although Adams (1990) revealed that one of the best predictors of reading in young children was their level of phonemic awareness and the National

Reading Panel (2000) also concluded that phonemic awareness instruction had a positive effect on reading and spelling.

Beginning with Chall's results published in 1967 in *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* and continuing through the National Reading Panel's findings in 2000, a systematic phonics approach has been recommended for reading instruction. The research of Beck and McCaslin (1978) and Beck and Block (1979) focused on systematic phonics, specifically the order that letter/sound correspondences are taught and how many meaningful words can be created using the letter/sound correspondences. They were also interested in the instructional strategies used for teaching blending and offering students opportunities to blend words in connected text. Cooke, Slee and Young (2008) analyzed five basal reading programs focusing on the connection between spelling instruction and reading.

The matrix for analyzing instructional approaches for phonemic awareness, phonics, and the student readers provides an indication of the kind of instruction provided for these topics over time.

Table 3.C ***Matrix for Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling***

Series title/copyright	Phonemic Awareness Instruction	Sequence of Letter/Sound Correspondences	Instructional Strategies for Phonics	Spelling Words	Types of Spelling Activities
Treasury of Literature 1996					
Signatures 1999					
Collections 2001					
Trophies 2003					
Story Town 2009					
Journeys 2012					
Journeys-Common Core 2014					

3.4.4 Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Comprehension

The Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Comprehension matrix organizes information about comprehension instruction over time with specific attention to the kinds of questioning used before, during, and after reading. Questioning and comprehension instruction were the focus in studies by Beck et al., (1979); Durkin, (1981); and Dewitz and Leahy, (2009).

The matrix for analysis of instructional approaches for comprehension provides an indication of the types of instructional approaches used to support comprehension over time.

Table 3.D ***Matrix for Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Comprehension***

Series title/ copyright	Average Number of Questions During Story	Skills and Strategies Taught	Type of Comprehension Instructional Strategies Before, During and After Reading
Treasury of Literature 1996			
Signatures 1999			
Collections 2001			
Trophies 2003			
Story Town 2009			
Journeys 2012			
Journeys- Common Core 2014			

3.4.5 Analysis of Vocabulary Selection and Instructional Approaches

The Analysis of Vocabulary Selection and Instructional Approaches matrix organizes information about the rationale provided for selection vocabulary, the number and types of words selected, where the words come from, and how the words are taught.

The matrix for analysis of vocabulary selection and instructional approaches provides an indication of the types of vocabulary words taught and instructional approaches used over time.

Table 3.E ***Matrix for Analysis of Vocabulary Selection and Instructional Approaches***

Series title/ copyright	Rationale for Vocabulary Instruction	Average Number of Words per story M (SD)	Types of Words Taught	Source of Vocabulary	Instructional Strategies
Treasury of Literature 1996					
Signatures 1999					
Collections 2001					
Trophies 2003					
Story Town 2009					
Journeys 2012					
Journeys-Common Core 2014					

3.4.6 Analysis of Student Reader

The Analysis of Student Reader is presented on two matrices: Selection Level and Word Level. The Selection Level matrix is a tool for collecting information about the number of selections in the student reader and the genre of those selections. The matrix also provides a place for organizing information about the average number of pages with text, average number of words per selection, average number of sentences in a selection, and average number of words in those sentences. This information was used to determine the average readability of the selections.

The Word Level matrix is a tool for collecting the number of unique words in a selection, the number of kindergarten review words, vocabulary words, decodable words, and words not taught. The predicted decodability of selections was also analyzed. Words are considered decodable if strategies to decode have been taught in current or prior lessons, or the words have

been taught holistically, such as high-frequency words and story words. The focus on decodability was a primary focus in the studies by Beck and McCaslin (1978), Beck and Block (1979), Hoffman et. al. (1994), Hoffman, Sailors and Patterson (2002), Stein, Johnson, and Gutlohn (1999), Forman et al. (2004), and Maslin (2007).

The matrices for analyzing the student readers provides an indication of the number, genre, readability, and decodability of the selections over time.

Table 3.F ***Matrix for Analysis of Student Reader: Selection Level***

Series title/ copyright	Number of Selections	Genres	Number of Pages with Text M (SD)	Number of Words Per Text M (SD)	Number of Sentences Per Page M (SD)	Number of Words Per Sentence M (SD)	Average Spache Readability (GRE)
Treasury of Literature 1996							
Signatures 1999							
Collections 2001							
Trophies 2003							
Story Town 2009							
Journeys 2012							
Journeys-Common Core 2014							

Table 3.G ***Matrix for Analysis of Student Reader: Word Level***

Series title/ copyright	Selec-tion	Number of Unique Words	Number of Kindergarten Review Words/Number of Unique Words (% of Unique Words)	Number of Vocabulary Words/Number of Unique Words (% of Unique Words)	Number of Decodable Words/Number of Unique Words (% of Unique Words)	Number of Other Words/Number of Unique Words (% of Unique Words)	Predicted Decoda-bility
Treasury of Literature 1996							
Signatures 1999							
Collections 2001							
Trophies 2003							
Story Town 2009							
Journeys 2012							
Journeys-Common Core 2014							

3.4.7 Analysis of Supplemental Resources

The Analysis of Supplemental Resources matrix organizes information about the types and purposes of supplemental resources available for instruction.

The matrix for analysis of supplemental resources provides an indication of the types and purposes of supplemental resources designed to support reading instruction over time.

Table 3.H ***Matrix for Analysis of Supplemental Resources***

	Big Books		Little Books				Cards						Traditional Resources					Technology			
Series title/ copyright	Big Books	Big Book of Rhymes	Leveled Readers	Decodable Books	Take Home Books	Vocabulary Readers	Sound/Spelling Cards	Letter Cards (word building)	High Frequency word cards	Picture Cards	Vocabulary in Context Cards	Retelling Cards, Sentence Strips	Practice Books	Blackline Masters	Transparencies	Literacy Centers, Project/Theme Cards	Student Magazine to Extend Common Core	CDs, Audio and Videocassettes	Digital Online Technology	Whiteboard Lessons	Phonics Connection
Treasury of Literature 1996																					
Signatures 1999																					
Collections 2001																					
Trophies 2003																					
Story Town 2009																					
Journeys 2012																					
Journeys-Common Core 2014																					

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Krippendorf (1980) states that "if research results are to be valid, the data on which they are based, the individuals involved in their analysis, and the processes that yield the results all must be reliable. Krippendorf identifies three types of reliability: (a) stability (intra-observer reliability), which involves the same coder coding the same data set at two different times, aiming for consistency, (b) reproducibility (inter-coder reliability), which involves two coders producing the same results under varying circumstances, and (c) accuracy, which involves comparing the coding of a data set against a known standard.

In this study, I will address stability and reproducibility as follows. I will initially code the data set in each matrix. At a later date, I will recode 50% of the data set in each matrix. A second coder will recode the remaining 50% of the data set in each matrix. This procedure will ensure that each data set will be coded twice, with the goal of 90% reliability as recommended by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Coders will work together to come to agreements on any discrepancies and possibly recode a greater percentage of the data. Additionally, revisions to the matrices will be made as needed.

Holsti defines validity as the "extent to which an instrument is measuring what it is intended to measure" (1969, p.142). Validity depends upon (a) objectivity, using explicitly formulated rules and procedures; (b) system, the use of consistently applied rules for the inclusion of content or categories; and (c) generality, that the findings have theoretical relevance. This study was designed to address these guiding principles by developing categories for content analysis as well as using categories from previous research. In addition, the categories will be

reviewed by my dissertation advisor and committee members prior to being put into use. These procedures should address issues of validity.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

There have been many studies that have examined multiple basal reading programs at one point in time, but there has not been a study of one publisher's programs across several decades. The purpose of this study is to investigate one basal reading program's beginning of the year first grade resources from 1996 to 2014. The analysis of these resources will be contextualized within concurrent developments in research and policy.

This study may have a number of limitations including, but not limited to, the following issues:

- The sample used was based on one basal, one grade level and one theme book. Specifically, the Harcourt reading series, grade one, first theme. The results may be different if other basal series or grade levels were examined.
- The materials that I had access to were limited. Although the teacher's edition included reproductions of the stories found in the student readers and references to supplementary materials, I did not have access to all supplementary materials. For example, I did not have access to take home items or supplemental decodable readers to determine how those resources relate to instruction.

4.0 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a document analysis and content analysis of the first-grade resources of one basal reading program from 1996 to 2014 in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How have the content, resources, and instructional approaches in the first-grade materials offered by a basal reading publisher changed over time from 1996 to 2014?
2. What do the changes in content, resources, and instructional approaches suggest about the influence of research and policy?

Although there have been several studies that have examined multiple basal reading programs at one point in time, there has not been a study of one publisher's programs across several decades. The focus of this study was the Harcourt basal reading series. The editions included *Treasury of Literature* (1996), *Signatures* (1999), *Collections* (2001), *Trophies* (2003), *Story Town* (2009), *Journeys* (2012), and *Journey-Common Core* (2014). The samples for this study were the instructional resources used at the beginning of first grade for each of the series, which were found in the teacher's edition.

Using a set of eight matrices, I analyzed the teacher's edition, student readers, and supplementary materials. Each teacher's edition was analyzed to determine the number of pages and instructional approaches devoted to (a) phonemic awareness, (b) phonics, (c) fluency, (d) comprehension, (e) vocabulary, (f) spelling and (g) writing. The teacher's editions were also

analyzed to document the review of skills taught in kindergarten. The student readers were analyzed to determine the number and genre of selections as well as the number of words per selection, sentences per page, and decodability. The available supplementary resources were also identified and described. A final analysis focused on the authorship of the programs and the research and policy current at the time of publication.

In the following sections, I provide an analysis of the changes across the editions from 1996-2014 in specific areas and contextualize those changes by referring to the then-current research and policy context as well as the authorship, shown in Table 4.B.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF TEACHER'S EDITION

The first analysis of the Harcourt teacher's editions was to describe the initial lessons dedicated to a review of kindergarten skills. Subsequently, the teacher's editions were analyzed to determine the relative emphasis of instructional topics. Specifically, I wanted to find out how much attention was devoted to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing instruction by documenting the number of pages for each.

In the sections that follow, I present an analysis of each topic listed above and I contextualize the page number analysis results (Table 4.A) by connecting them to (a) the matrix identifying authorship and the policy and research context (Table 4.B) and (b) the matrices analyzing instructional approaches (Tables 4.C, 4.D, and 4.E).

Table 4.A ***Analysis of Number and Percentage of Pages in Teacher's Edition for Specific Topics***

Series title/ copyright	Review from kindergarten	Number and percentage of pages in teacher's edition							
		PHONEMIC AWARENESS # pgs. (%)	PHONICS # pg. (%)	SPELLING # pgs. (%)	FLUENCY # pgs. (%)	COMPREHENSION # pgs. (%)	VOCABULARY # pgs. (%)	WRITING # pgs. (%)	OTHER # pgs. (%)
Treasury of Literature 1996	13 lessons (1-2 days each) 19 initial consonants (no *q* or *x*) 23 sight words	0 (0%)	17 (12%)	3 (2%)	5 (4%)	28 (20%)	7 (5%)	7 (5%)	71 (51%)
Signatures 1999	11 lessons (1-2 days each) 19 initial consonants (no *q* or *x*) 23 sight words	2 (1%)	36 (16%)	6 (3%)	7 (3%)	27 (12%)	15 (7%)	12 (5%)	115 (52%)
Collections 2001	13 lessons All 26 letters in order Initial sounds of consonants, short vowel sounds No sight words	10 (3%)	32 (9%)	11 (3%)	8 (2%)	54 (15%)	21 (6%)	30 (9 %)	152 (43%)

Table 4.A ***(Continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Review from kindergarten	Number and percentage of pages in teacher's edition							
		PHONEMIC AWARENESS # pgs. (%)	PHONICS # pg. (%)	SPELLING # pgs. (%)	FLUENCY # pgs. (%)	COMPREHENSION # pgs. (%)	VOCABULARY # pgs. (%)	WRITING # pgs. (%)	OTHER # pgs. (%)
Trophies 2003	17 lessons All 26 letters, beginning and ending sound, not in order Short vowel sounds 23 sight words	15 (5%)	74 (22%)	37 (11%)	15 (5%)	41 (12%)	27 (8%)	30 (9%)	93 (28%)
Story Town 2009	20 lessons All 26 letters, beginning and ending sound, not in order Short vowel sounds 37 sight words	15 (4%)	84 (21%)	35 (9%)	24 (6%)	86 (21%)	30 (7%)	30 (7%)	103 (25%)
Journeys 2012	5 lessons Reviews a, m, s, t, c, beginning and ending sounds Short vowel sounds 10 sight words	15 (5%)	44 (15%)	13 (4%)	5 (2%)	46 (16%)	29 (10%)	30 (10%)	114 (39%)
Journeys-Common Core 2014	5 lessons Reviews a, m, s, t, c, beginning and ending sounds Short vowel sounds 10 sight words	16 (6%)	23 (9%)	13 (5%)	7 (3%)	58 (23%)	19 (8%)	30 (12%)	82 (33%)

Table 4.B ***Analysis of Research, Policy Context and Authorship***

Series title/ copyright	Research/policy context	Authorship	Topics emphasized in frontmatter
Treasury of Literature 1996	Whole language, integrated curriculum	Roger Farr, Dorothy Strickland, 19 other authors and consultants	Emergent literacy, integrated language arts, child centered, authentic literature, cooperative groups, reading/writing connection
Signatures 1999	Whole language, theme based instruction	Roger Farr, Dorothy Strickland, 13 other authors and consultants	High-quality trade books, cross-curricular content, flexible groups, supports reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking
Collections 2001	Adams (1990) National Reading Panel (2000)	Roger Farr, Dorothy Strickland, 13 other authors and consultants	Oral language, phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, vocabulary, writing, comprehension
Trophies 2003	National Reading Panel and the 5 Essential Components of Reading (2000)	Isabel Beck, Roger Farr, Dorothy Strickland, 8 other authors and consultants	Phonemic awareness, explicit systematic phonics instruction, fluency instruction, text comprehension instruction, vocabulary instruction, reading aloud, writing, listening/speaking
Story Town 2009	National Reading Panel and the 5 Essential Components of Reading (2000)	Isabel Beck, Roger Farr, Dorothy Strickland, 8 other authors and consultants	Explicit, systematic instruction in the 5 components of reading, reading/writing connection, 5 traits of writing and writing process (in professional development booklet)

Table 4.B (*continued)*

Series title/ copyright	Research/policy Context	Authorship	Topics emphasized in frontmatter
Journeys 2012	National Reading Panel (2000) Common Core State Standards (2011) Response to Intervention (2004)	James Bauman, David Chard, Jamal Cooks, J. David Cooper, Russell Gersten, Marjorie Lipson, Lesley Mandel Morrow, John Pikulski Hector Rivera, Mabel Rivera, Shane Templeton, SheliaValencia, Catherine Valentino, MaryEllen Vogt, Irene Fountas (consulting author)	none
Journeys-Common Core 2014	National Reading Panel (2000) Common Core State Standards (2010) Response to Intervention (2004)	James Bauman, David Chard, Jamal Cooks, J. David Cooper, Russell Gersten, Marjorie Lipson, Lesley Mandel Morrow, John Pikulski, Shane Templeton, SheliaValencia, Catherine Valentino, MaryEllen Vogt, Irene Fountas (consulting author), 2 common core consultants	Common Core – text complexity, domains and topics, extended reading with exemplar texts, writing and performance tasks.

4.1.1 Kindergarten Review

As shown in Table 4.A, each teacher's edition included review lessons designed to reinforce phonics skills and sight words introduced in kindergarten. The noteworthy finding in this analysis is the extreme shift from no sight words in 2001 to a large number of sight words in the 2012 and 2014 editions.

While the 1996, 1999, 2003 and 2009 editions included a review of 23-37 sight words, there were no sight words reviewed in 2001. A review of the kindergarten teacher's edition for 2001 revealed that there were no formal sight word lessons. Teachers were instructed to frame a high frequency word found in the story, tell the students the word, and then ask students to find that word in the story. A possible explanation for the lack of formal sight word lessons is that the 2001 edition is the first edition that came out after the report of the National Reading Panel in 2000, which emphasized phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Only 10 sight words were reviewed (*I, like, to, a, see, the, we, go, is,* and *are*) in the 2012 and 2014 teacher's editions. A review of the kindergarten teacher's edition for those years revealed that 44 sight words were taught and tested in 2012 and 88 sight words in the 2014 edition. The majority of these words are retaught throughout the first-grade edition. A possible explanation for the difference in sight words between these two editions is the push of the Common Core State Standards to increase the complexity of text for each grade level. Complex texts would require introducing more words that were not decodable.

In terms of the introduction of letter/sounds, the earlier editions focused on 19 initial consonants (1996-2001) with short vowels added to the review in 2001. In the 2003 and 2009

editions, short vowels and all consonants were reviewed in the initial and final position and the letters were used to make decodable words, such as *map, rap, man, sat, cat*; and *win, wag, hog, hip* and *wig.* These lessons also made use of Beck's cumulative word blending, which was a primary instructional strategy in grade 1. The 2012 and 2014 editions reviewed only 5 letter/sounds in the initial and final positions (*a, m, s, t,* and *c*). These editions also used these letters to make decodable words such as *mat, cat, sat.* The words were practiced by blending the letters together, but, Beck's cumulative word building method was not used.

4.1.2 Phonemic Awareness

Prior to the publication of *Beginning to Read* (Adams, 1990), phonemic awareness was not a familiar concept in the professional literature. Although the scope and sequences of the 1996 and 1999 editions listed phonemic awareness as a skill under *Emergent Literacy*, there were no formal instructional lessons in phonemic awareness, as shown on Table 4.A. The 1999 edition focused on auditory discrimination found in the spelling lessons for the week. Most of these lessons were rhyming activities, such as asking students to clap if they heard two words that rhyme. Some of the word pairs were *hot/pot, lot/pet, not/pan,* and *shot/tot.*

By 2001, phonemic awareness became a topic of interest and attention because it was foregrounded in the National Reading Panel report (2000). Thus, in the 2001-2014 editions there is more attention given to phonemic awareness instruction. The 2001 edition incorporated a phonemic awareness lesson under Word Work on days 1, 3, and 5. Whereas, the 2003 through 2014 editions included a phonemic awareness activity as part of each day's warm-up routine. Across these editions phonemic awareness represents about 5% of instructional attention.

As shown in Table 4.C, the types of phonemic awareness activities in the 2001-2014 editions became more varied including identifying individual sounds (beginning/middle/end), blending and segmenting syllable and sounds, and making phoneme substitutions. An example found in the 2001 edition asks students to listen to words and say the word parts (syllables). They were also asked to change the beginning or ending sound of a word with another letter. An example in the 2003 edition includes two activities for the warm up. The first activity asks students to identify the first sound in words and the second activity asks students to decide whether the target phoneme is found at the beginning or the end of the word. An example for the 2012 and 2104 editions asks students to say the last sound of a word.

Table 4.B provides information about the research context for each teacher's edition. The increase instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics beginning in 2001 can be attributed to the research of Adams (1990) and the recommendations of the National Reading Panel (2000). Adams determined that the best predictor of reading in young children is their knowledge of letters and their level of phonemic awareness. Her recommendations included the use of systematic phonics instruction and reading programs that used a balanced approach between phonics and comprehension. The National Reading Panel foregrounded research showing that the ability to manipulate the sounds in language helped students learn to read.

4.1.3 Phonics

As shown in Table 4.A, the percentage of pages addressing phonics instruction was relatively consistent across editions with the exception of the 2003 and 2009 editions, which increased phonics instruction to an average of 21.5 percent of all teachers' edition pages.

As shown in Table 4.C, there was a noteworthy shift in approaches to phonics instruction in 1999. The use of word building was introduced in the last story where the students are asked to change letters in words to make a new word and tell what the new word is. The 2001 edition also uses a form of word building. The teacher builds the word, and then passes her hand under the letters as she pronounces the word. The 2003 edition introduces the use of cumulative blending. In this approach, the sound represented by the first letter is pronounced then the sound represented by the second letter is added to the first sound so that the two letters are sounded together. The sound represented by the third letter is then added to the first two sounds to pronounce the entire word. Sound by sound blending replaces cumulative blending in the 2012 and 2014 editions.

The increase in pages devoted to phonics and the change in approaches to phonics instruction coincides with a change in authorship and research and policy. By 2003, No Child Left Behind had been in place for a few years, allowing publishers to refine and align their basals to policy. Also, Isabel Beck joined Roger Farr and Dorothy Strickland as an author for the 2003 and 2009 editions. Beck is known for her work in explicit, systematic phonics and the use of cumulative, or successive, word building focusing on the sounds represented by letters in all positions of a word.

The focus on phonics instruction decreases in the 2012 and 2014 series, with the percentage of pages dedicated to phonics instruction in the 2014 series dropping to less than half found in the 2003 edition, 22% to 9%. This could be attributed to a change in authorship and the shift in policy context to the Common Core. As shown in Table 4.B, there was a significant change in authorship for the 2012 and 2014 editions. The core authors of Beck, Farr, and Strickland were replaced by a group of 15 authors, none of whom were associated with a strong

advocacy of phonics. Also, while the Common Core acknowledges the importance of the foundational skills (concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency) needed to become a proficient reader, the main goal is for students to be able to read and comprehend complex text independently and proficiently. Therefore, the 2012 and 2014 editions decreased the number of pages devoted to phonics to focus more on the close reading of more complex texts. Also, as described below, spelling instruction in those editions included attention to phonics.

4.1.4 Spelling

As shown in Table 4.A, pages devoted to spelling instruction remained relatively consistent across the editions except for the 2003 and 2009 editions, which increased spelling instruction to around 10 percent of all teacher's edition pages. The noteworthy finding is that beginning in 2003 the editors provided a list of spelling words that focused on the targeted letter/sound of the week and a systematic instructional sequence (see Table 4.C). That sequence included a pretest on Day 1, assorted spelling activities, including word building, word sorts and student practice pages throughout the week, and a spelling test on Day 5. The 2003 and 2009 editions provided six spelling words for the targeted letter, two review words, and two high-frequency words for practice. The 2012 and 2014 editions only provided six spelling words for the targeted letter.

The increase in spelling instruction in the 2003 and 2009 editions can most likely be attributed to the report of the National Reading Panel, which foregrounded the importance of phonics instruction to improve decoding and encoding (spelling). The use of explicit, systematic

phonics instruction helps beginning readers understand letter/sound correspondences and spelling patterns and how to apply this knowledge in their reading and writing/spelling.

Table 4.C ***Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Spelling***

Series title/ copyright	Phonemic awareness instruction	Sequence of letter/sound correspondences	Instructional strategies for phonics	Spelling words	Types of spelling activities
Treasury of Literature 1996	None listed	t, x, n, g, d – final consonants short o, a phonograms –ag, -ap, -at, -ot	Interactive teaching- write sentence from story, identify the vowel, say words, listen for vowel sound	No set word list	Game-like activities reinforcing hearing the target sound at the beginning of words. Separate teacher book for spelling
Signatures 1999	None listed, although uses auditory discrimination lessons, alliteration	t, p, b, n – final consonants short a, o phonograms –ap, --ot, -an, -at, -op	Identifying target sound at end of words Word building using phonograms	No set word list	Auditory discrimination using phonograms Separate teacher book and student practice book for spelling

Table 4.C ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Phonemic awareness instruction	Sequence of letter/sound correspondences	Instructional strategies for phonics	Spelling words	Types of spelling activities
Collections 2001	Listed under phonics. Auditory discrimination, rhyming, phoneme substitution and addition, blending	m, a, s, t, c, p, h, d, i, n, k, ck, l, ll phonograms -am, -at, -ap, -ad, -id, -it, -ack, - ick	Introduce letter, display card, student write words with beginning letter. Say series of words, every time hear sound, student place letter card at beginning or ending of word builder pocket. Word building – form word, ask children to name each letter, pass hand under letters to pronounce word.	No set word list.	Making words with phonograms Word building journal – write letter, draw a picture of something that starts with that letter Copy words into journal Write a sentence and illustrate Student practice book
Trophies 2003	Rhyming, identifying beginning and ending phonemes, phoneme isolation (vowels)	a, i, ck, o, all	Introduce letter with letter card. Cumulative word building	Set list of 10 words that include the targeted letter/sound of week. Includes 2 review and 2 high frequency.	Pretest, word sort, word building, state generalization, circle the letter, review, post test Student practice book

Table 4.C ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Phonemic awareness instruction	Sequence of letter/sound correspondences	Instructional strategies for phonics	Spelling words	Types of spelling activities
Story Town 2009	Discrimination of sounds, beginning, middle and ending, word segmentation, blending/segmenting syllables, blend onset/rime, rhyming, deletion/addition	a, i, ck, o, all phonograms –ap, -at, -ag, -and, -ick, -ink, -ill, -it	Introduce letter with letter card. Cumulative word building	Set list of 10 words that include the targeted letter/sound of week. Includes 2 review and 2 high frequency.	Pretest, word sort, word building, state generalization, circle the letter, review, post test Student practice book
Journeys 2012	Rhyming, identify beginning and ending sounds, blend sounds into words, segmenting sounds in words	wk. 1 - a, n, d, p, f wk. 2 – i, r, h, s/z/, b, g wk. 3 – o, l, x wk. 4 – e, y, w, k, v, j wk. 5 – u, qu, z	Introduce letter with letter card Sound by sound blending (similar to cumulative)	Set of six words practicing the short vowel for the week. They are introduced in order.	Pretest, word sort, segment sounds, connect to writing. Student practice book
Journeys Common Core 2014	Rhyming, identify beginning and ending sounds, blend sounds into words, segmenting sounds in words	wk. 1 - a, n, d, p, f wk. 2 – i, r, h, s/z/, b, g wk. -3 – o, l, x wk. 4 – e, y, w, k, v, j wk. 5 – u, qu, z	Introduce letter with letter card Sound by sound blending (similar to cumulative)	Set of six words practicing the short vowel for the week. They are introduced in order.	Pretest, word sort, segment sounds, connect to writing. Student practice book

4.1.5 Fluency

Pages related to fluency instruction remained the same across teacher's editions at around 3 to 6 percent of all teacher's edition pages, as shown in Table 4.A. The highest percent of pages devoted to fluency instruction occurred in the 2003 and 2009 editions, while fluency instruction decreased by half in the 2012 and 2014 editions. The increase in fluency instruction in the 2003 and 2009 editions can be attributed to the National Reading Panel, which concluded that instruction in repeated oral reading procedures had a positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Most of the editions encouraged the use of choral reading, echo reading, partner reading, and repeated reading. The 2012 and 2014 editions focused more on independent reading to increase fluency.

4.1.6 Comprehension

The pages devoted to comprehension include all story-related questions and all lessons focusing on comprehension. Thus, pages developing background information were excluded from the count. Table 4.A shows that pages devoted to comprehension instruction were 20 percent of all teacher's edition pages in 1996, while that percentage decreased to an average of 13 percent in the 1999, 2001, and 2003 editions. There was a sharp increase in attention to comprehension instruction in 2009 to 21 percent of all teacher's edition pages, dropping again in the 2012 edition to 16 percent and then increasing to 23 percent of all teacher's edition pages in the 2014 edition.

In order to describe the instruction related to comprehension, it is important to understand the stories that students listened to or read. In the teacher's editions for 1996, 1999 and 2001 the

stories were trade books that rhymed or were repetitive and predictable. The teacher was supposed to read these to students.

A dramatic shift took place beginning in the 2003 teacher's edition. The stories changed from predictable to decodable. Students were supposed to read these texts themselves.

As the stories children listened to or read changed, so too did the instruction related to those stories. As shown in Table 4.D, comprehension instruction in the 1996 through 2001 editions mainly focused on using picture clues, making and confirming predictions, emphasizing the predictability of text, classifying information in text, and noting details. These editions also include prompts for students to retell and summarize after a reading of the story, but no formal lessons to teach those skills are included.

The comprehension instruction in the 2003 through 2014 editions shifted to skills and strategies such as sequencing, summarizing, inferencing and identifying main ideas and related details. The 2012 and 2014 editions also focused on text and graphic features and story structure, which align with the Common Core State Standards.

As shown in Table 4.D, how comprehension was taught also changed. In the 1996 edition, the teacher was given dialogue to use for a think-aloud to model pre-reading skills and strategies. The story was then to be read straight through by the teacher. At the conclusion of the reading, students were asked personal response questions, such as, "Did you like this story? What was your favorite part?" In addition, the students were asked to summarize the story with the teacher asking the question, "What was the whole story about?" The last story in the teacher's edition included a lesson with stopping places marked throughout the story with prompts for the teacher to think aloud as a model for using a strategy, such as the think-aloud model from page T134: *"I can use the picture to figure out what the boy is going to see next. I*

see a basket of wood, and I see a tail. I see some eyes peeking out from the wood. I think the boy will see a dog or a cat next."

In the 1999 edition, comprehension instruction became more organized using a Strategic Reading format. Each story opened with a specific strategy focus such as: relate pictures to text and draw conclusions, make and confirm predictions, the predictability or pattern of story, and sequencing. The teacher modeled the strategy and then engaged students in applying it throughout the reading of the story.

The 2001 edition also identified a specific strategy before reading. These were the same four strategies found in the 1999 edition. The noteworthy feature in the 2001 edition is the inclusion of questions to be asked after reading on every page to monitor comprehension.

The 2003 and 2009 editions are similar in that both editions taught focus skills and strategies, but the types of skills and strategies and the instructional approaches are very different. The 2003 edition focused on the skills of sequencing, predicting outcomes, details, and drawing conclusions. The strategies taught in the 2003 edition included decoding phonics, rereading aloud, making and confirming predictions, making inferences and self-correcting. During the pre-reading strategies on Day 2, the teacher explained the focus skill and strategy. The story was then read using a guided comprehension in which the teacher set a purpose for reading and stopped frequently to ask questions. The focus strategy was reinforced during the reading of the story. At the end of the story there were some comprehension questions and some form of a retelling of the story. On Day 4, the focus skill was taught using a teach/model/practice/apply method.

The 2009 edition focused on the skills of making predictions, classifying and categorizing, characters, and the beginning, middle, and end of the story. The strategies taught in

the 2009 edition included answer questions, ask questions, make inferences, summarizing, recognizing story structure, and adjusting reading rate. The skills and strategies were explained to the students using dialogue for a think-aloud that was provided in the teacher's edition.

The focus skill was addressed each day using the format of previewing the skill on Day 1, introducing the skill on Day 2, and reviewing the skill on Days 3, 4, and 5. On Day 2, the skill was taught using a teach/model/practice/apply method; while Days 3, 4, and 5 used a review/practice/apply method. The reading of the story was the same as in the 2003 edition: read on Day 2 using a guided comprehension approach in which the teacher set a purpose for reading and stopped frequently to ask questions. Again, the focus strategy was reinforced during the reading of the story and the end of the story there were some comprehension questions and some form of a retelling of the story.

The same comprehension skill and strategies with the same stories are included in the 2012 and 2014 editions. However, the instruction differs. The 2012 edition teaches the skill and strategy on Day 2 using the teach/model/guided practice/apply method. As the story is read, a graphic organizer is completed for the skill and teacher modeling and questions are asked throughout the story to develop comprehension. At the end of the story there is a personal response activity and a guided retelling of the story. On Day 3 the comprehension skill and strategy is revisited again using the teach/model/guided practice/apply method.

The 2014 edition uses a close reading approach, which means that the story is read more than one time. The first time the story is read is on Day 1. The target skill and strategy is briefly introduced and a graphic organizer is completed as the story is read. The questions asked throughout the story to develop comprehension are the same as in the 2012 edition, but think alouds are added for teacher modeling. At the end of the story there was still a guided retelling

of the story, but the personal response activity was removed. On Day 2 the story is read again to analyze the text. Instruction begins with a comprehension lesson focusing on text features such as genre, text and graphic features, main idea, sequence of events, and understanding characters using the teach/model/guided practice/apply method. After the second reading on Day 2, the class discusses the story and writes a response using text evidence. On Day 3 the text is read again independently by the students.

There are several noteworthy observations about comprehension instruction across the editions from 1996 through 2014. First, the average number of questions asked during the story increased from 12 questions in a story averaging 22 pages in the 1996 edition, to 21 questions in a story averaging only 11 pages in the 2009 edition. This count does not include building background information or any stops focusing on phonics skills. Second, some of the comprehension instructional strategies for before, during, and after reading stayed consistent, such as building background, setting a purpose for reading, predicting, use of picture clues, use of graphic organizers, sequencing, retelling and summarizing. However, the format for teaching comprehension changed significantly. In the early editions, there were no formal lessons for comprehension. Over the years, comprehension instruction has evolved to include specifically identifying a skill and strategy to teach. Teacher modeling, think alouds, and questioning throughout the text have been incorporated. Also, an organized method for teaching comprehension – teach, model, practice and apply – has been applied. Third, the 2014 edition, which is aligned with the Common Core State Standards, focuses on two readings of the story. The first reading focuses on developing comprehension of the text, while the second reading focuses on analyzing the text.

Table 4.D ***Analysis of Instructional Approaches for Comprehension***

Series title/ copyright	Average number of questions during story	Skills and strategies taught	Types of comprehension instructional strategies		
			Before reading	During reading	After reading
Treasury of Literature 1996	12 only in last story of manual (7 literal, 5 expand literature)	Think Aloud/Model Use picture clues Setting a purpose Make/confirm predictions Identifying patterned text Comprehension Lessons Classifying Noting details	Build background Preview and predict Set a purpose	(last story only) Make/confirm predictions Use picture clues Identify patterned text	Think Alouds Compare/contrast Personal responses Create new ending Graphic organizer Classify Retell/summarize
Signatures 1999	10	Think Aloud/Model Relate pictures to text/draw conclusions Make/confirm predictions Predictability or pattern of language Sequencing Mini Lesson Sequence Main idea/details Classifying	Build background/concepts Set purpose Make/confirm predictions	Relate pictures to text Think Alouds Make/confirm predictions Using predictability Inferences	Retell/summarize Sequencing Descriptive responses Personal responses Critical/creative analysis Using pictures to draw conclusions Identify character's feelings

Table 4.D *(continued)*

Series title/ copyright	Average number of questions during story	Skills and strategies taught	Types of comprehension instructional strategies		
			Before reading	During reading	After reading
Collections 2001	17	Think Aloud/Model Use picture clues to confirm meaning Make/confirm predictions Use pattern of text to predict Sequencing Comprehension Lesson Classifying	Build background Make predictions Set purpose	Use picture clues Make/confirm predictions Sequence events Use word order and context	Inferencing Retell/summarize Summarize with pictures Summarize with story map Appreciating literature
Trophies 2003	18	Focus Skill Sequence Predict outcomes Details Draw Conclusions Focus Strategy Use decoding/phonics Reread aloud Make/confirm predictions Make inferences Self-correct	Build background Use of graphic organizers (web) and charts Preview/predict Set purpose	Predictions/read and find out Relate pictures to text Cause/effect Note details Compare fantasy to reality	Summarize Sequence Draw conclusions Compare/contrast Retelling (main idea chart, story chart) Author's purpose

Table 4.D *(continued)*

Series title/ copyright	Average number of questions during story	Skills and strategies taught	Types of comprehension instructional strategies		
			Before reading	During reading	After reading
Story Town 2009	21	Focus Skill Make predictions Set purpose/predict Classify/categorize Beginning/middle/end Characters Focus Strategy Answer questions Ask questions Make inferences Summarize Recognize story structure Adjust reading rate	Predictions	Graphic organizers	Summarize Retell
Journeys 2012	11	Target Skill Main idea/details Understand characters Sequencing Text and graphic features Story structure Target Strategy Summarize Infer/predict Monitor/clarify Question	Essential question and big idea Develop background Set purpose Analyze text and graphic features	Think Alouds Use of explanation and questioning Graphic organizer Use of pictures Inferencing Compare/contrast Sequencing Main idea/details Cause/Effect Story structure Identify characters	Retell through pictures Guided retell Sequence of events Relate to characters Interpret story structure Author's purpose Draw conclusions

Table 4.D *(continued)*

Series title/ copyright	Average number of questions during story	Skills and strategies taught	Types of comprehension instructional strategies		
			Before reading	During reading	After reading
Journeys Common Core 2014	8 – 1st read 2- 2nd read	<u>Target Skills</u> Main idea/details Understanding characters Sequence of events Text and graphic features Story Structure <u>Target Strategies</u> Summarize Infer/predict Monitor/clarify Question Analyze/evaluate	Preview text Essential Question Set purpose	Infer/predict Use of text evidence Graphic organizers Monitor/clarify Author's word choice Sequence of events Text and graphic features Questions strategy Analyze/evaluate	<u>1st read through</u> Summarize (Guided Retelling) Think through text Use text evidence <u>2nd read through</u> Analyze the text (characters, genre, author's word choice, sequence of events, text/graphic features, story structure, main idea)

4.1.7 Vocabulary

For the purposes of this study, the term *vocabulary* refers to the words that are introduced at the beginning of a story, practiced throughout the week and usually tested. The words were selected from those in the weekly story. Across the editions these vocabulary words were referred to in different ways. In the 1996 and 1999 editions, they were called Key Words; in 2001, Vocabulary Words; and in 2003, 2009, 20012 and 2014, High Frequency Words. Definitions for the words were provided in all but the 2009 edition, but only in the 2012 and 2014 editions included definitions as part of the instructional routine.

As shown in Table 4.A, from 1996 to 2014, the percentage of pages addressing vocabulary doubled from 5% in the 1996 and 1999 editions to 10% by the 2012 and 2014 editions. As shown in Table 4.E, the selected words for each story varied between 9 words in the 1996 edition to 4 words in the 2003 edition. High-frequency words are the words that appear the most in printed materials. For example: *the, a, and, can, do, they, go, to* and *you.*

The 2009 edition added oral vocabulary words (vocabulary in a student's speaking and listening vocabulary), and the 2012 and 2014 editions added selection vocabulary (words from the story), and academic vocabulary words. These vocabulary words were introduced but not tested.

As shown in Table 4.E, in all of the editions the vocabulary focused on high-frequency words found in the weekly selections. The 1996, 1999, 2012, and 2014 editions did not offer any rationale for vocabulary instruction. Only the 2001 through 2009 editions supplied information in the frontmatter concerning the importance of vocabulary in reading. The rationale given for vocabulary development in these editions aligned with the National Reading Panel findings

(NRP, 2000). According to the NRP (2000), vocabulary knowledge is important in the development of reading and listening skills. It should be taught using direct and indirect instruction with multiple exposures to the words and should actively engage students.

Across the teacher's editions, vocabulary instruction changed from asking a student to read words from a list that they might recognize to an instructional approach using a systematic and structured sequence. The beginning of the 1996 edition introduced the vocabulary after the story had been read two times. In the last story, the format changed to introducing the vocabulary after building background and before the story was read. The vocabulary strategies included displaying a chart and asking students to read any words that they knew, reading the chart together, and using questioning to elicit an appropriate vocabulary word, such as "What word begins with the same sound as_____?" or "Which words tell three things cats can do?" A Take-Home book, which reinforced vocabulary words, was also available to use for practice at school and home. The definitions that were provided were simple two or three word explanations such as: *lot* – many, much; *got* – did get; and *brown* – color of coffee.

The 1999 edition introduced the vocabulary words before reading the story on Day 1 by displaying a transparency and asking students to read the words they knew. Using the words in context, the teacher helped students read the sentences. There was then an activity to practice identifying the vocabulary words, such as having the students hold up the word that rhymes with the one the teacher says, or asking questions to elicit the vocabulary word. On Day 4, the vocabulary words were reviewed with a worksheet with sentences to complete using the vocabulary words. A Take-Home/Keep-At-Home book, which reinforced vocabulary words, was also available to use for practice at school and home. As in the 1996 edition, the definitions

provided in the 1999 edition were also very simple, such as: *play* – to have fun; and *friends* – people you like.

The 2001 edition is noteworthy in two ways. It is the first edition to engage students in vocabulary activities each day and to incorporate the use of a word wall. On Day 1, previously taught vocabulary was briefly reviewed. The vocabulary for the new story was introduced on Day 2 by displaying a chart and asking students to read the words and sentences along with the teacher. After that there was an activity to check understanding of the vocabulary, such as partners matching like word cards, and a challenge activity, such as finding the words in magazines and making a collage. Days 3, 4 and 5 were review days with assorted activities for reading the vocabulary in context. There was also a take-home book available that provided a story context for reinforcing the vocabulary words. The definitions provided were similar to the previous editions.

The 2003 edition reviewed previously taught vocabulary words on Day 1 and introduced the new vocabulary for the story on Day 2. A transparency with the words in sentences was displayed for the class to read together. There was a check understanding activity, such as an every-pupil response, in which the teacher said the words and the students held up the appropriate word card. Days 3, 4, and 5 included activities to review the vocabulary words such as reading words in context on sentence strips, or creating sentences with the words. The 2003 edition made use of a word wall and decodable take-home books that included some of the vocabulary words. The definitions provided were again simple, such as: *down* – toward the ground; and *in* – inside of.

There were a number of changes in vocabulary instruction in the 2009 edition. First, a teach/model/guided practice method was incorporated to introduce vocabulary words. Second,

there was daily word wall practice of all introduced vocabulary during a warm-up suggested for use at the beginning of the day. Third, robust oral vocabulary instruction was employed based on words selected from a read-aloud. Last, and noteworthy, the meanings of words were developed in the context of a sentence and definitions were not provided for the teacher.

Previously taught vocabulary words were practiced using a decodable reader on Day 1. The new vocabulary words were introduced on Day 2 using a teach/model/guided practice method. The teacher wrote the words on the board, pointed to a word and read it, repeated the word and had the students say the word. The teacher used the word in a sentence, repeated the word and spelled it. The students then said and spelled the word and read the word one more time. On Days 3 and 4 the words were reviewed using the review/practice/apply method and reviewed on Day 5.

Another noteworthy finding in the 2009 edition is the instruction in additional oral vocabulary through the use of a teacher read aloud. According to Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002), words can be divided into three groups, or tiers. Tier 1 are basic, common words that rarely require instruction, such as *baby*, *happy*, and *go*. Tier 2 words are high frequency words that mature language users may use often, such as *curious*, *absurd*, and *fortunate*; while Tier 3words are content specific and low frequency, such as *metamorphosis, magma,* and *peninsula*. The purpose of instruction in robust vocabulary is to increase students' vocabulary development through the introduction of Tier 2 words, such as *excellent, ruin,* and *considerate*, using explicit and direct instruction. The emphasis on teaching Tier 2 words as oral vocabulary can be attributed to Beck as author of the 2009 edition, Margaret McKeown as a contributing author, the National Reading Panel (2000), and the Common Core State Standards (2011). The NRP noted

the importance of vocabulary knowledge and its relationship to comprehension, while the CCSS defined standards in vocabulary acquisition and use that students were expected to meet.

After reading a story to the students, the teacher introduced six robust vocabulary words (3 words on Day 1 and 3 words on Day 3) using the following routine: The word was used in context from the selection. The students were given a student-friendly explanation, such as: *pouted* – If you pouted, you showed you were not happy by making a face. The students said the word. The teacher used the word in other contexts, and had the students interact with the word's meaning. For example, for the word *pout,* the teacher would ask, "What might cause a young child to pout – getting a new toy or having to take a nap?" Finally, the student friendly explanation was given again and the students said the word. On Days 2, 4, and 5 the robust vocabulary words were reviewed.

The 2012 and 2014 editions employed the same stories, teacher read alouds and oral vocabulary, and teaching approaches. The vocabulary words were practiced daily in the opening routines with an introduction to new vocabulary on Day 1 by pointing out the new vocabulary on the word wall. The words were taught later on Day 1 using Vocabulary in Context cards and pages in the student book that also presented the words in context. A teach/practice/apply method was used. The Vocabulary in Context card was displayed. The teacher read and pronounced the word and had the students do the same. The word was defined and then used in context. Lastly, engagement with the word took place by discussing how the word could be used. For example, for *find* – make a list of things you could *find* on a farm. On Day 2 the vocabulary words were practiced while developing the background for the story using a teach/model/guided practice/ apply method. The vocabulary words were also practiced using five different decodable readers throughout the week. The definitions provided for the

vocabulary words were given in complete sentences. For example: *play* – Play means to do things that are fun; *look* – Look means to see something; and *find* – Find means to discover something.

There was also selection vocabulary that was introduced on Day 2 while building background for the story. These were words found in the story that were not decodable or easily recognized. The teacher was instructed to tell students that they might not recognize some words in the story they would be reading. The teacher was then instructed to orally explain the words. The definitions for these words were a mix of student-friendly and simple definitions. For example: *curious* – If you are curious, you are eager to find out about things; *kids* – children; *mess*- something that is dirty or spilled all over; and *come* – to move to a person or a place.

The 2012 and 2014 editions included oral vocabulary instruction through a teacher read aloud on Day 1. The instruction differed from the 2009 edition in that all six words were introduced after the read aloud. The teacher was instructed to use an instructional routine card to define the vocabulary words and use the word in context from the story. For example: *apart* – separate, away from others – *The townspeople feared strangers and kept themselves apart from others*; and *still* – not moving – *"Hold still," she said.* The words were revisited on Day 2, 3, and 4 during the opening routines in the section titled "Daily Vocabulary Boost". The students would be asked questions to interact with the oral vocabulary words, such as, *"How are a rabbit's ears different from a person's ears?"*

The noteworthy finding in the 2012 and 2014 is the inclusion of instruction of academic vocabulary or language on Day 4. Academic vocabulary is vocabulary used across many domains and topics, such as *classify, context, synonyms*, and *alphabetical order.* In addition, the 2014 edition includes review and enrichment of selection vocabulary on Day 3.

Even though terminology has changed across the teacher's editions, all vocabulary words chosen from 1996 through 2014 included high-frequency words found in the reading selection. There are a number of noteworthy findings for vocabulary instruction. First, there was the movement to a systematic instructional approach, the use of a word wall, and daily practice of vocabulary beginning in 2001. Second, the instruction of oral language vocabulary through a teacher read aloud beginning in 2009, and, last, the instruction of academic language in the 2014 Common Core edition. As noted in the description of developments in phonics instruction, developments in vocabulary instruction were dramatically influenced by Isabel Beck and Margaret McKeown's contributions as members of the authorship team.

Table 4.E ***Analyses of Vocabulary Selection and Instructional Approaches***

Series title/ copyright	Rationale for vocabulary instruction	Average number of words per Story M (SD)	Types of words taught	Source of vocabulary	Instructional strategies
Treasury of Literature 1996	No explicit explanation	9 (1.82)	High frequency	Story	Students asked to read any words they recognize on a chart with sentences. Hold up picture, ask for another word that starts the same as the picture.
Signatures 1999	No explicit explanation	7 (1.63)	High frequency	Story	Class read vocabulary words on a transparency. Use of rhyming and guessing to figure out the word. Sentence from the story with the vocabulary word missing.
Collections 2001	Opportunities to develop school vocabulary. Vocabulary development through listening to text. Multiple opportunities to read high frequency words.	9 (1.97)	High frequency	Story	Display words, ask children to read the words. Read the sentences aloud. Use of individual word cards w/ assorted activities. Activities to reinforce words, such as find words in magazines. Use of word wall Reading word in context Take-home books to reinforce vocabulary words.

Table 4.E ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Rationale for vocabulary instruction	Average number of words per story M (SD)	Types of words taught	Source of vocabulary	Instructional strategies
Trophies 2003	Key component in students' reading comprehension. Need repeated exposure to vocabulary words in order to improve comprehension. Need to develop effective word-learning strategies.	4 (1.17)	High frequency	Story	Introduce words in context. (teacher point to each word, say it aloud, track print) Check understanding with individual word cards. Review words in context. Use of word wall Say and spell the word.
Story Town 2009	Use direct instruction. 3 types of vocabulary word: Tier I, II, III Need to know what a word means to understand what they are reading. Actively engaged in thinking about a words' meaning. Multiple exposures to a word.	High Freq. 4 (0.83) Robust Voc. 6 (0)	High frequency, Tier II robust words	Story, teacher read-aloud	High frequency words – write words on board, read, use in a sentence, spell word; use word sorts and word walls. Robust vocabulary - Offer an instructional sequence for direct vocabulary instruction: put word in selection context; use of student-friendly explanation; multiple opportunities to use words in different contexts; interact with word's meaning; recall meaning through explanations.

Table 4.E ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Rationale for vocabulary instruction	Average number of words per story M (SD)	Types of words taught	Source of vocabulary	Instructional strategies
Journeys 2012	No explicit explanation	High Freq. 6 (0) Oral Voc. 6 (0) Selection Voc. 6 (0)	High frequency, oral vocabulary, selection vocabulary (Only tested on high frequency words)	Story, teacher read-aloud	Use of routine cards High frequency words – use of word wall; say word, spell, write, check; use of context cards; assorted games to practice words (tic tac toe, word jar, hopscotch, etc.); high frequency word cards for practicing. Oral vocabulary – introduce through teacher read aloud; preview definitions; use of questioning; reviewed daily. Selection vocabulary – teacher gives a short explanation of word that student may see in story but not recognize.

Table 4.E ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Rationale for vocabulary instruction	Average number of words per story M (SD)	Types of words taught	Source of vocabulary	Instructional strategies
Journeys Common Core 2014	No explicit explanation	High Freq. 6 (0) Oral Voc. 6 (0) Selection Voc. 6 (0)	High frequency, oral vocabulary, selection vocabulary (Only tested on high frequency words)	Story, teacher read-aloud	Use of routine cards High frequency words – use of word wall; say word, spell, write, check; use of context cards; assorted games to practice words (tic tac toe, word jar, hopscotch, etc.); high frequency word cards for practicing. Oral vocabulary – introduce through teacher read aloud; preview definitions; use of questioning; reviewed daily. Selection vocabulary – teacher gives a short explanation of word that student may see in story but not recognize.

4.1.8 Writing

As shown in Table 4.A, pages devoted to writing instruction remained consistent at 5 percent of all teacher's editions pages in 1996 and 1999 and has slowly increased over the past eighteen years. Writing instruction in the 2012 and 2014 editions doubled since 1996 to 10 percent of all teacher's edition pages. The number of pages dedicated to writing increased from a one-paragraph activity in response to the literature in 1996 to a full page of writing instruction for each day of a story beginning in 2001. The 2012 and 2014 editions extended the writing instruction even further with 2 pages of instruction for Day 5. This increase of instruction can be attributed to the development of standards for writing in the Common Core State Standards.

Writing instruction in the 1996 edition focused on the use of personal journals to record and confirm reading predictions and respond to the literature. During the response to the literature section, there was a writing activity that coincided with the story. The use of patterned writing was prevalent, such as using the sentence starter "I'm _____" with the students filling in the blank with things they can do. At the end of each theme there was a writer's workshop whole class activity including prewriting, drafting, responding and revising, proofreading, and publishing. The focus of the writing was collaborative whole class work with a drawing activity first. With prompting, the class dictated what the teacher should write. Throughout the process the teacher modeled and guided the entire writing process.

The 1999 edition used personal journals to make predictions and reflect on the story. There was also a writing activity for each day of the story, using "thinking as writer", prewriting, draft, and publishing model over a five-day period. All five days of lessons were found on a two-page spread on Day 2, with one paragraph of instruction for each day. The writing consisted

of children drawing a picture and the teacher helping them complete a patterned writing, such as *I see my* _____, to caption the picture. The students' pages were then combined into a class book.

The 2001 edition is similar to the 1999 edition in that it also used a writer's workshop model incorporating a prewrite, draft, revise and respond, proofread, and publish sequence that resulted in classroom books. There was a page of writing instruction incorporated in each day's lesson. There are some noteworthy changes found in the 2001 edition. First, the students were given a sentence frame to complete with minimal help from the teacher. Second, teacher modeling was incorporated in the lessons, and last, there were scoring rubrics and observation checklists available for the teacher to use.

The 2003 edition incorporated writing throughout all 5 days of teaching, but used two different models. Four of the stories used the writer's workshop process of prewrite, draft, respond and revise, proofread and publish to create a class book or story. During these writer's workshops, the teacher used modeling and guided the activity by recording on chart paper with input from students. The final copy was created by the teacher cutting up the draft and having each student copy a sentence. Two of the stories incorporated a shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing activities. Each day's activities were stand-alone writing activities, such as describing the characters from the story and writing invitations. A noteworthy change is the use of a daily journal writing prompt that encouraged students to draw and write a few words or a sentence about their drawing.

Like the 2003 edition, the 2009 edition included a daily writing prompt. Writing began on Day 1, with a modeled writing, where the teacher taught and modeled a skill, used think alouds and guided practice, and then had students practice and apply the skill themselves. For

example: during the Teach/Model, the teacher introduced writing sentences and discussed that a good sentence gives information, uses a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end, and has spaces between the words. During the Guided Practice, the teacher and students read other sentences and discussed what information was in the sentences. Finally, the students were asked to write sentences about each other using the sentence frame: _____ can _____. There were Shared Writing activities on Days 3 and 4 and Independent Writing on Days 4 and 5 to practice the skills from the previous day's lessons. Day 5 also included sharing time where the students were invited to share their work with their classmates using the Author's Chair. A noteworthy change in the 2009 edition is the use of Traits of Writing. This approach, initially designed in the 1980's by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), is an approach that identifies specific characteristics of effective writing. These characteristics include: *ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency*, and *conventions. Ideas* is the main message of the writing, *organization* is the structure of the writing, *voice* is the tone and flavor of the author's message, and *word choice* is the vocabulary that the author uses to convey the message. *Sentence fluency* is the rhythm and flow of the writing, while *conventions* covers the mechanics of writing, such as grammar, spelling, and usage. One other trait is sometimes added, *presentation,* which is the appearance of the writing on the page, such as neatness, handwriting and a polished piece ready to publish.

Both the 2012 and 2014 editions taught writing in the same way. They both used Trait Writing, the same writing prompts and activities, and the same method. On Day 1 the teacher introduced, taught, and modeled a skill using a projectable model provided by the publisher. The class would then complete a shared writing activity together. On Day 2 the focus trait was introduced, taught and modeled using a projectable model, and then the students completed a

guided writing activity using the focus trait. The teacher taught and modeled a prewriting skill and presented a writing prompt on Day 3. After the instruction, the students completed a prewriting independent writing activity, such as completing a graphic organizer. The drafting of the writing activity took place on Day 4 with the teacher discussing and modeling how to complete a draft using the skill of the week. The students then completed their own drafts. Day 5 was for revising and proofreading. Using a projectable, the teacher explained and modeled revising. The students then revised their own work and checked it using a proofreading checklist and writing rubric.

There are a number of noteworthy changes in instructional approaches for writing across the teacher's editions. The 1999 edition used a writer's workshop approach to teach writing daily. Writing workshop included prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and publishing. Beginning in the 2009 edition, the use of 6 + 1 Traits of Writing was included. Lessons focused on one of the six writing traits as developed by the Northwest Region Educational Laboratory. The + 1 is the presentation of the writing. One last change is found between the 2012 and 2014 editions. These two editions share the same kindergarten review, phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, stories, and writing activities, but there are changes in rubrics and titles. The 2012 writing traits scoring rubric was restructured from six traits to four, combining word choice with voice, and conventions with sentence fluency, for the 2014 edition. The rubric also became a six-point scoring guide in the 2014 edition. Finally, the writing heading of "Writing About Us" was changed to the academic language of "Narrative Writing" in the 2014 edition. This change was to help students develop academic vocabulary through exposure to academic language, such as *narrative, revise, details, text and graphic features*, and *characters*, aligning the 2014 edition to the Common Core State Standards.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF STUDENT READER

The texts that beginning readers read have been researched and debated for many years. In her research, Chall (1967) analyzed and compared the content of first grade readers from the 1950's and early 1960's. Some of the areas that she analyzed were pages per story, words per page, and new words per story. In the First-Grade Studies, Bond and Dykstra (1967) concluded that the words used in stories should be selected with a greater balance between phonetically regular and irregular. In *Becoming a Nation of Readers,* (1985), Anderson and his colleagues recommended that first grade reading books should include decodable selections, while Adams (1990) recommended that students should be given opportunities to practice reading using text at appropriate levels of difficulty. The National Reading Panel (2000) also recommended that students should have the opportunity to practice reading with decodable text.

Five studies have analyzed the accessibility of the selections in student readers. In 1994, Hoffman and his colleagues examined what genres were represented, as well as the readability and decodability of the selections in first grade basals (Hoffman, McCathey, Abbott, Christian, Corman, Curry, Dressman, Elliot, Matherne, & Stahle, 1994). Stein and her colleagues analyzed first grade basals for the relationship between decoding instruction and the decodability of the selections in student readers (Stein, Johnson, & Gutlohn, 1999). In 2002, Hoffman and colleagues again analyzed first grade basal selections for decodability, using the 2000 editions (Hoffman, Sailors, & Patterson, 2002). In 2004, Foorman and her colleagues analyzed first grade basals examining text features such as decodable words that contain only sound-spelling patterns taught, repetition of words, unique words, length of texts, the total number of words in a selection, and the grammatical complexity of the text (Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, &

Griffin, 2004). Lastly, in 2007, Maslin analyzed top-selling first grade basal programs from the early 2000s for readability, decodability, and sequence of phonics instruction.

In the present study, selections in the first level student readers were analyzed to determine the accessibility of the texts that students were expected to read. The analysis addressed the selection level and the word level, as shown in Tables 4.F and 4.G. The selection level analysis focused on the genres and readability of the texts. The readability analysis included the average number of pages in a selection, the number of words per selection, the number of sentences per page, the number of words per sentence, and the average readability of the selections.

The word-level analysis focused on the decodability of the selections. This analysis involved examining each selection in order to determine the number of unique words, number and percentage of kindergarten review words, selection vocabulary, decodable words, words not taught, and the predicted decodability.

The sections that follow present the results of these analyses.

4.2.1 Selection Level: Number and Length of Selections

As shown in Table 4.F, across the editions, the number of selections ranged from 4 to 6. The most current editions (2012 and 2014) included 5 selections. Selections in the 1996 edition averaged 22 pages. This number decreased across editions to an average of 10 pages for each of 6 selections.

4.2.2 Selection Level: Genre of Selections

All selections in the student readers can be categorized as fiction, nonfiction, or rhyming, as shown in Table 4.F. Rhyming selections include story-length poems and stories written with rhyming patterns. Nonfiction selections include informational texts as well as photo-essays.

The 1996 teacher's edition did not identify the story genres, but beginning in the 1999 edition the genre was listed for each story. Beginning in 2003, nonfiction selections were included.

4.2.3 Selection Level: Readability Variables

Subsequently, the student reader selections were analyzed for specific variables related to readability. These included (a) total number of words per selection, (b) total number of words per page, and (c) number of words per sentence. Finally, readability was analyzed using the Spache formula, designed to determine readability in texts up to third grade.

As shown in Table 4.F, the change in the total number of words per selection was quite dramatic. In the 1996 edition, there was an average of 140 words per selection. In 1999, that number decreased almost by one half to an average of 76 words per selection. In the 2003 edition, the average number of words per selection dropped again by almost 25 percent, from 76 words per selection to an average of 47 words per selection. In the most recent editions, 2012 and 2014, the average number of words per selection climbed to an average of 82 words, actually higher than the 2001 edition of 74 words per selection.

The number of sentences per page was steady at an average of 1 sentence per page until the 2012 and 2014 editions, where the average number of sentences per page increased to 2.

Across all of the editions the number of words per sentence stayed consistent at an average of 5 words per sentence

A readability analysis of the selections was conducted using the Spache readability formula. This formula uses sentence length and the number of unfamiliar words (words not found on the Spache Revised Word List) to calculate the approximate grade level equivalent (GRE) for the text. The Spache Revised Word List is a list of more than 925 words that are considered to be everyday words. A few examples are: *as, breakfast, don't, did, of, frighten, sad, walk, would*, *tomorrow,* and *rabbit.* The formula to determine the Spache readability is (0.086 x ASL) + (0.086 x PDW) + 0.839. ASL is the average sentence length and PDW is the percent of difficult words. Thus, 0.0 would be equivalent to the first month of kindergarten, 1.7 would be equivalent to the seventh month of first grade, and 2.5 would be equivalent to the fifth month of second grade.

Overall, the Spache readability formula shows that the average readability for all of the editions was very close, ranging from 1.4 GRE to 1.7 GRE (4^{th} month of 1^{st} grade to 7^{th} month of 1^{st} grade). It is difficult to get a readability score for such simple texts. The predicted decodability described in the next section provides a better indication of text difficulty.

There are a number of noteworthy changes in the student readers at the selection level. First, there was a decrease in the number of pages with text per selection (22 pages to 10 pages) and a decrease in the number of words per selection (140 words to 47 words). These changes can be attributed to the move from whole language in the 1996 edition to decodable text in the 2003 edition. Whole language emphasized the use of authentic literature, thus, the selections were longer stories from children's literature. The change to decodable text allowed the publishers to create shorter selections with fewer words per selection.

Second, the increase in the average number of words per selection found in the 2012 and the 2014 editions can be attributed to the influence of the Common Core State Standards (2011). The CCSS raised the level of complexity of texts that students were expected to read. As a result, the complexity of texts that students at each grade level are expected to be able to read independently is increasing.

Third, using the Spache formula, readability has stayed consistent across of the editions. Meaning that the average sentence length has stayed steady, and the majority of the words in the stories were found on the Spache word list, keeping difficult words to a minimum.

Table 4.F ***Analysis of Student Reader: Selection Level***

Series title/ copyright	Number of selections	Genres	Number of pages with text M (SD)	Number of words per text M (SD)	Number of sentences per page M (SD)	Number of words per sentence M (SD)	Average Spache readability (GRE)
Treasury of Literature 1996	4	Fiction (3) Rhyme (1)	22 pages (1.26)	140 words (25.46)	1 sentence (0)	6 words (0.96)	1.5
Signatures 1999	6	Fiction (4) Fantasy (1) Rhyme (1)	15 pages (3.5)	76 words (22.32)	1 sentence (0.82)	5 words (1.37)	1.5
Collections 2001	6	Fiction (2) Fantasy (2) Rhyme (1) Photo Essay (1)	13 pages (3.78)	74 words (22.91)	1 sentence (0)	5 words (1.17)	1.6
Trophies 2003	6	Fiction (3) Fantasy (1) Nonfiction (2)	10 pages (2.43)	47 words (22.91)	1 sentence (0.52)	5 words (1.38)	1.5
Story Town 2009	6	Fiction (3) Nonfiction (3)	11 pages (2.79)	53 words (25.25)	1 sentence (0)	4 words (0.75)	1.4

Table 4.F ***(continued)***

Series title/ copyright	Number of selections	Genres	Number of pages with text M (SD)	Number of words per text M (SD)	Number of sentences per page M (SD)	Number of words per sentence M (SD)	Average Spache readability (GRE)
Journeys 2012	5	Fiction (1) Fantasy (2) Informational text (2)	10 pages (1.1)	82 words (23.3)	2 sentences (0.41)	5 words (0.45)	1.6
Journeys Common Core 2014	5	Fiction (1) Fantasy (2) Informational text (2)	10 pages (1.1)	82 words (23.3)	2 sentences (0.41)	5 words (0.45)	1.6

4.2.4 Word Level: Decodability

The word-level analysis focused on determining the predicted decodability of text selections. Decodability is a measure of how many words in a text that students should be able to decode or recognize because of instruction or focused exposure. Instruction refers to phonics elements that students have been taught and should be able to apply in decoding a word. For example, if students have been taught the letter/sound correspondences for *a, c, m, n,* and *t* they should be able to decode the words *at, cat, mat, Nat, an, man, can, and tan.* Focused *exposure* refers to words that have been introduced to students with practice in pronouncing them and understanding their meaning and use. Words in this category include words introduced in kindergarten and reviewed in grade 1, and words selected as vocabulary to be taught before reading. Some examples include *he, of, we, for, play, have,* and *little.*

In addition to the above categories of words, a set of words were categorized as *other*. These were words that were not taught or explained at all before reading the story. For example, *town, asleep, surprises, cow, horse, rabbits, crocodile, and learned.*

To provide a sense of the predicted decodability of selections across editions, I selected the first and last selection in each edition. Then, I followed this procedure:

1. count the total number of unique words in the selection
2. count the total number of words that were **review words** from kindergarten (focused exposure)
3. count the total number of words that were introduced as **vocabulary** prior to reading the selection (focused exposure)
4. count the total number of words that should be **decodable** based on the phonic elements to which students had been introduced at that point in the curriculum (instruction)

5. count the total number of other words, words that were not in the review, vocabulary, or decodable categories
6. add total number of words in focused exposure and instruction categories and calculate percentage to determine predicated decodability

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4.G.

As shown in Table 4.G, the decodability of the selections ranged from 25 percent in the 1996 edition and increased 80 – 90 percent in later editions. Selections in the 1996 edition were the least decodable with a predicted decodability of only 25 percent for the first selection. The story relied heavily on vocabulary words taught (16%), with 75 percent of the words in the story not taught at all. The decodability of the last story in the 1996 edition increased to 71 percent, but it still relied heavily on the vocabulary words taught (46%) with 29 percent of the words not taught at all. The percentage of kindergarten review words for the first selection was only 5 percent and increased to 21 percent for the last selection. Both of these stories included only 1 or 2 decodable words.

The predicted decodability of the 1999 edition selections increased to 60 percent for the first selection and 80 percent for the last selection. These selections relied heavily on vocabulary words taught (around 33) and kindergarten review words (20% and 31%). There was a high percentage of words not taught at all (40% and 20%, respectively).

In the 2001 edition, the percentage of decodable words increased dramatically. The first selection included 41 percent decodable words and 28 percent for the last selection. The percentage of words not taught were still at about 25 percent of the words.

The predicted decodability of the selections in the 2003 and 2009 editions was the highest of editions. The first selections in both of the editions were 100% decodable. How the

selections achieved this decodability differed. The first selection in the 2003 edition included 45 percent decodable words and an even amount of kindergarten review and vocabulary words (27% each). The 2009 selection included a heavier focus on kindergarten review and vocabulary words (38% each) and only 25 percent decodable words.

Both of the last selections of 2003 and 2009 editions increased the percentage of decodable words (54% and 45%), reduced the percentage of kindergarten review words (21% and 29%), and decreased the percentage of vocabulary words (14% and 21%). The percentage of words not taught in the 2003 edition was 11% and 5% for the 2009 edition. The overall predicted decodability for the last selection of the 2003 edition was 89%, while the overall decodability for the 2009 edition was 95%.

The 2012 and 2014 editions added another type of vocabulary called "selection vocabulary." These were words that the teacher was instructed to tell the students that they might see and not recognize. These words might have been found in the title of the story or within the text. Some examples of the selection vocabulary words are *pal, come, storm, curious, firefighters, takes, window,* and *street.* The teacher was to write the words on the board and read them with the children and explain them. The words did not receive any other instruction or practice throughout the week. I included these words in the "other" category.

The first selections of the 2012 and 2014 edition were 86 percent decodable with 38 percent of the words embodying the decoding skills previously taught, 19 percent kindergarten review words, and 29 percent vocabulary words. The percentage of words not taught was 14%. The predicted decodability of the last selection increased to 92 percent.

There are a number of noteworthy findings in the decodability analysis of the

selections. The low predicted decodability of the 1996 edition could be attributed to the whole language philosophy of the edition. The focus was on the use of authentic text that the teacher was expected to read to the students multiple times. The students were expected to learn to read through the use of highly predictive and repetitive text, rhyming and illustrations.

The predicted decodability jump from 25 percent and 71 percent for the 1996 edition to 60 percent and 80 percent for the 1999 edition might be attributed to the "Texas Textbook proclamation of 1998 for the Year 2000 adoption" discussed in the research conducted by Hoffman and colleagues (2002). In 1998, the Texas Education Agency stated that textbooks (which could include extra materials such as little books) needed to be at least 80 percent decodable to be considered for the 2000-year adoption by the state of Texas.

Even though the decodability in the 2001 selections was only 71 percent and 78 percent, the 2001 edition would have been affected by the Texas textbook proclamation. The 2001 edition actually included two decodable phonics practice readers per selection. These practice readers are also printed in the teacher's manual for instruction on Day 1 and Day 3. Including these in the analysis of decodability would most certainly increase the overall predicted decodability of the 2001 edition.

The 100% decodability of the first selections, and slightly less in the last selections, in 2001 and 2003 can be attributed to the National Reading Panel (2000) and Beck as a senior author of these two editions. These editions also incorporated phonics readers for additional practice. The 2001 edition included two phonics readers per selection, one to be taught on Day 1 and the other on Day 3. The 2009 edition included one phonics reader to be read on Day 1. Beginning in the 2003 edition through the 2014 edition, leveled readers were also available to

continue the reinforcement of vocabulary and phonics skills. These will be further discussed in the section about supplementary resources.

The 2012 and 2014 editions followed the recommendations of the Common Core State Standards (2011), which recommended an increase in text complexity across grades K-12, thus readers per selection, a different one to be used on Day 1, 2, 3, and 4. If taken into account, including the readers would increase the overall decodability.

It is impossible to create stories that would include only decodable words from letters taught. There will always be a need for some high-frequency or sight words, such as *I, a, the, and, me, like, you, no,* and *what.* Overall, though, the 2003 edition had the highest percentage of decodable words (45% and 54%) allowing the most practice of letter/sound correspondences that had been taught.

Table 4.G ***Analysis of Student Reader: Word Level***

Series title/ copyright	Selection	Number of unique words	Number of kindergarten review words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of vocabulary words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of decodable words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of other words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Predicted decodability
Treasury of Literature 1996	Quick as a Cricket	56	3/56 (5%)	9/56 (16%)	2/56 (4%)	42/56 (75%)	25%
	I Went Walking	28	6/28 (21%)	13/28 (46%)	1/28 (4%)	8//29 (29%)	71%
Signatures 1999	What I See	15	3/15 (20%)	5/15 (33%)	1/15 (7%)	6/15 (40%)	60%
	Popcorn	35	11/35 (31%)	12/35 (34%)	5/35 (14%)	7/35 (20%)	80%
Collections 2001	A Big Surprise	17	0/17 (0%)	5/17 (29%)	7/17 (41%)	5/17 (29%)	71%
	The Big, Big Wall	40	0/40 (0%)	20/40 (50%)	11/40 (28%)	9/40 (23%)	78%
Trophies 2003	The Hat	11	3/11 (27%)	3/11 (27%)	5/11 (45%)	0/11 (0%)	100%
	All That Corn	28	6/28 (21%)	4/28 (14%)	15/28 (54%)	3/28 (11%)	89%

Table 4.G *(continued)*

Series title/ copyright	Selection	Number of unique words	Number of kindergarten review words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of vocabulary words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of decodable words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Number of other words/number of unique words (% of unique words)	Predicted decodability
Story Town 2009	Let's Tap	8	3/8 (38%)	3/8 (38%)	2/8 (25%)	0/8 (0%)	100%
	All on the Map	38	11/38 (29%)	8/38 (21%)	17/38 (45%)	2/38 (5%)	95%
Journeys 2012	What is a Pal?	21	4/21 (19%)	6/21 (29%)	8/21 (38%)	3/21 (14%)	86%
	Gus Takes the Train	51	8/51 (16%)	17/51 (33%)	22/51 (43%)	4/51 (8%)	92%
Journeys Common Core 2014	What is a Pal?	21	4/21 (19%)	6/21 (29%)	8/21 (38%)	3/21 (14%)	86%
	Gus Takes the Train	51	8/51 (16%)	17/52 (33%)	22/51 (43%)	4/51 (8%)	92%

4.3 SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

In a comparison of the 1987 and 1993 basal programs, Hoffman and his colleagues (1994) examined material that was designed to support or extend teaching. Like that analysis, the present analysis focuses on the types of supplemental resources that are features in the Harcourt teacher's edition across editions.

As shown in Table 4.H, there are a number of items that have been included throughout all of the editions. Big books, some type of little book, assorted letter or word cards, practice books, blackline masters and technology are all mentioned for the use of supporting or extending teaching, although how they were used varied.

There are a number of noteworthy findings. First, even though there had been big books available for all editions, their use changed. In the 1996 and 1999 editions, the purpose of the big book was to share the student story in larger format. Beginning in the 2001 edition, the big book was used for shared reading at the beginning of the theme and contained different stories than the student anthology. Big books were also used during the kindergarten review lessons in the 2012 and 2014 editions to develop concepts of print and book knowledge.

In the 1999 through 2009 editions there was also a big book of rhymes that was used in various ways. The big book of rhymes was used to develop phonemic awareness in the 1999 and 2001 editions, while, in the 2003 edition, it was used occasionally on Day 5 during the wrap up for the week. The 2009 edition contained a big book of rhymes and poems that was used in the warm up routine every day to practice pre-reading skills such as: listening skills, concepts of print, rhyming words, and following directions.

In all editions, there was always some type of little book available for additional reading practice. In the 1996 and 1999 editions, there were only take-home books (cut out/ fold up

books) that reinforced vocabulary words. Later editions included decodable take-home books. Beginning in the 2001 edition, the little books expanded to include leveled readers and decodable books. Leveled readers are sets of books that have been written below, at, and above a grade level, while decodable books are books that include a high percentage of words that can be decoded.

As shown in Table 4.H, there have been a number of assorted cards available as supplemental resources. Alphabet letter cards and pictures cards were available in all editions, while high frequency (vocabulary) word cards were available beginning in 1999. The noteworthy findings are that beginning in the 2001 edition there were letter cards available for the teacher and students to use for word building. Also, the 2012 and 2014 editions included vocabulary in context cards to support teaching vocabulary. These cards contained a vocabulary word, definition, and picture on one side and a scripted lesson on the other.

All of the editions included a number of resources that are identified as traditional resources, such as assorted practice books, blackline masters, transparencies, and literacy centers or project cards.

Technology-related resources were also analyzed. As shown in Table 4.H, all editions included technology resources, but they have evolved as technology has evolved. In the editions up to 2012, various audio and videocassettes and CD's were available. These resources contained the selection stories on tape or videocassettes, and CD's containing games for the students or supplemental activities for phonics, grammar, and writing. Beginning in the 2001 edition, supplemental resources could be found online. These resources have evolved from offering interactive games online in the 2001 and 2003 editions to offering blackline masters, student ebooks, leveled readers, decodable readers, complete teacher editions, and teaching

resources online beginning in the 2009 edition. The 2014 edition includes interactive whiteboard lessons, allowing all instruction to be customized and displayed on whiteboards.

Of particular note is the increasing reliance on little books to provide reinforcement for phonics and vocabulary development. Also, the use of big books as a context for teaching concepts of print and for shared reading.

In addition to supplemental resources for teaching, Harcourt developed resources for English Language Learners (ELLs), and below-average, and advanced students. The 1996, 1999, and 2001 editions included suggestions for differentiation in sidebars throughout the teacher's edition and in targeted reteaching lessons. The 2003 edition included sidebars, multi-level practice books, website support, and a separate ELL Resource Kit and Intervention Resource Kit. The 2009 edition expanded on the resources for the 2003 edition to include a Challenge Resource Kit for advanced students and leveled readers for below, average, advanced, and ELL students. The 2009 edition also offered suggestions for differentiating instruction for these students in small groups.

The 2012 and 2014 editions offered a Reading Tool Kit for the below-average students, identified as Intensive Tier III, and materials and lessons in the teacher's edition for additional intervention for the below-average and ELL students. The 2012 and 2014 editions also included multi-level practice books, sidebars, and suggestions for small group instruction for the below, average, advanced, and ELL students. A noteworthy finding between the two editions is that the 2012 edition identifies the intervention as small group options while the 2014 edition changes the terminology to RTI (Response to Intervention) to align with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004.

Table 4.H ***Analysis of Supplemental Resources***

	Big books		Little books				Cards						Traditional resources					Technology		
Series title/ copyright	Big books	Big book of rhymes	Leveled readers	Decodable books	Take-Home books	Vocabulary readers	Sound/spelling /alphabet cards	Letter cards (word building)	High frequency word cards	Picture cards	Vocabulary in context cards	Retelling cards, sentence strips	Practice books	Blackline masters	Transparencies	Literacy centers, project/theme cards	Phonics kit	CDs, audio and videocassettes	Digital online technology	Whiteboard lessons
Treasury of Literature 1996	X				X		X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Signatures 1999	X	X			X		X		X	X			X	X	X	X		X		
Collections 2001	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	
Trophies 2003	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	

Table 4.H *(continued)*

	Big books		Little books				Cards						Traditional resources					Technology		
Series title copyright	Big books	Big book of rhymes	Leveled readers	Decodable books	Take-Home books	Vocabulary readers	Sound/spelling / alphabet cards	Letter cards (word building)	High frequency word cards	Picture cards	Vocabulary in context cards	Retelling cards, sentence strips	Practice books	Blackline masters	Transparencies	Literacy centers, project/theme Cards	Phonics kit	CDs, audio and videocassettes	Digital online technology	Whiteboard lessons
Story Town 2009	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Journeys 2012	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Journeys Common Core 2014	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X

5.0 DISCUSSION

This study was designed to address these research questions:

- How have the content, resources, and instructional approaches in the first-grade materials offered by a basal reading publisher changed over time from 1996 to 2014?
- What do the changes in content, resources, and instructional approaches suggest about the influence of research and policy?

In this section, I will focus on interpreting what I consider to be the most important results of my investigation. These include the following: (a) gap between research and uptake by the basal publisher, (b), influence of policy, and (c) influence of authorship. Then, I will consider implications related to the results, specifically issues related to (a) teacher agency and specialized knowledge, (b) resources for evaluating basal resources, and (c) responsibilities of basal publishers.

5.1 GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND UPTAKE BY BASAL PUBLISHERS

This investigation of content, resources, and instructional approaches in a basal reading series provides an important example of the gap between research and basal selections for beginning readers. As early as 1967, from her extensive research, Chall (1967) asserted that there should

be an early emphasis on phonics. During this same time, Bond and Dykstra (1967) conducted the First-Grade Reading Studies, which also led to their findings that a systematic phonics approach should be included in reading instruction, and the words used in stories should be balanced between decodable and high frequency words. Beck and McCaslin's research in 1978 asserted that a successful reading program should contain direct, explicit instruction of letter/sound correspondences, instruction in blending letter/sound correspondences into words, and repeated opportunities to practice decoding with connected text. However, decodability was not the major criteria for selections in the editions. In fact, by the 1980s, there was a fundamental shift to include children's literature and predictable text in the basal. The teacher read aloud the selection first. The students then practiced the story by chorally reading along with the teacher. It was not until the 2001 edition that the weekly reading selections included the anthology selection and two decodable phonics practice readers. Some specific analyses of first grade selections make this point clear.

There have been dramatic changes across the editions in the texts beginning readers are expected to read. The genres of the earlier editions were fiction that were repetitive or rhyming with as little as 25 percent decodability. The selections were also long with an average of 140 words per selection and 22 pages. There was a dramatic change in the 2003 edition when informational text was included and the decodability for the first selection was 100 percent. The selections were pared down to 53 words per selection and 10 pages long. The newest editions that are following the common core policy (2012 and 2014) have shown an increase in the average number of words to 82 words, keeping the total pages to 10, but increasing the number of sentences on a page to two.

Although selections have become more decodable in the newer selections, Fitzgerald and her colleagues (2015) asserted that text complexity level has increased dramatically since 1962. Thus, the selections are introducing more new words with less repetition than in the earlier editions. Fitzgerald and her colleagues concluded that students are facing more demands than ever in basal reading programs and a concerted effort must be made to ensure that the basal is supplemented with texts that provide considerable practice with repetition of words meaning, sight words and core phonic pattern.

In addition to increased text complexity, with the adoption of No Child Left Behind (2002), formal reading instruction in the basal program has been pushed down to kindergarten. In her analysis of the Scott Foresman basal programs, Hiebert (2015) raised concerns about the changes in expectations in beginning literacy instruction: (a) earlier is better, (b) word repetition is not a factor, and (c) one size fits all. To developmentally prepare children to read, they must have many rich literacy experiences from listening to books, manipulating magnets, and scribbling and drawing before formal instruction. These activities used to be associated with kindergarten, but are now being removed. Thus, students that are coming into kindergarten without these literacy experiences are at a definite disadvantage.

Hiebert maintains that there is little attention paid to the repetition of vocabulary in beginning texts, yet beginning readers do require the repetition of words. Thus, research needs to focus on what words and the level of repetition is required.

Finally, Hiebert asserts that a "one size fits all" approach needs to be abandoned. Existing research shows that comprehension suffers when texts are too hard.

5.2 INFLUENCE OF POLICY

This analysis shows that the connection between policy and uptake is closer than between research and uptake. The 1997 congressional mandate that created the National Reading Panel (NRP) to review existing research to determine which methods were the most effective for reading instruction has had the greatest impact on changes in the basal. These changes are first fully seen in the 2003 edition, and is the watershed of the seven basal programs examined. The changes were far reaching.

The NRP noted that the acquisition of phonemic awareness helped students understand and use the alphabetic code. The 2003 edition included phonemic awareness instruction daily, incorporating varied activities such as identifying individual sounds in all positions of a word, blending and segmenting syllables and sounds, and phoneme substitution.

The NRP noted that phonics instruction improved student's ability to decode and encode regularly spelled words. Phonics instruction should be explicit and systematic and introduced early, in kindergarten and first grade. The 2003 edition increased the pages devoted to phonics instruction from 9% in the 2001 edition to 22%, and incorporated cumulative word building. There was an increase in instruction in spelling with the use of word building for decoding and encoding the targeted letter/sound of the week. The story selections also changed to decodable text, allowing for practice of the newly taught skills in connected text. The NRP report also concluded that guided repeated oral reading increased fluency, thus fluency practice in the 2003 edition increased slightly.

Comprehension in the 2003 edition shifted slightly to align closer with the recommendations of the NRP. The NRP asserted that comprehension strategies needed to be

explicitly taught. Although there was a decrease in the percentage of pages devoted to comprehension instruction in the 2003 edition, the teacher was expected to employ a teach/model/practice/apply method to teach the comprehension skill and strategy.

Finally, vocabulary instruction in the 2003 edition was aligned with the NRP's recommendation that vocabulary should be taught using direct and indirect instruction with multiple exposures to the words. Vocabulary instruction should also be actively engaging for students. The 2003 edition included assorted vocabulary activities for each day, used a word wall and decodable take-home books that included the vocabulary words.

Features in the 2009 edition continued to evolve into closer alignment with the recommendations of the NRP. Comprehension skills included: answer and ask questions, recognize story structure, and summarize. Vocabulary instruction incorporated a teach/model/guided practice method to introduce vocabulary words, and oral vocabulary instruction was included to acknowledge the importance of vocabulary knowledge and its relationship to comprehension.

In 2011 a state-led initiative developed the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to ensure consistency across all schools and states. This policy altered the basal programs once again, as seen in the 2012 and 2014 editions.

The CCSS recommended that students needed to have sustained exposure to more informational texts and an increase in text complexity. Thus, the 2012 and 2014 story selections increased the average number of words per text (82 words) and the number of sentences per page (2 sentences). The decodability decreased from 100 percent in the 2009 edition to 86 percent for the 2012 and 2014 editions. In addition, the 2012 and 2014 editions increased exposure to academic language, such as *narrative, revise, text and graphic features,* and *characters.* The

2014 edition employed close reading, which involved a first reading of a selection which was focused on developing where the first reading focused on developing comprehension, while the second reading focused on analyzing the text.

5.3 INFLUENCE OF AUTHORSHIP

Based on the results of the analysis, there is also evidence that important features of the basal program in this study were influenced by authorship. The change in authorship in the 2003 edition to Dr. Isabel Beck and Dr. Margaret McKeown produced changes in the kindergarten review, phonics, and vocabulary. These changes included reviewing consonants in the initial and final positions, instead of just the initial position. Word building and cumulative blending was used extensively throughout all lessons. Also, the 2009 edition, which was also authored by Dr. Beck and Dr. McKeown, included the development of robust oral vocabulary through the use of teacher a read aloud, focusing on tier 2 words.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS

In this section, I discuss some implications of my research related to (a) teacher agency and specialized knowledge, (b) resources for evaluating basal resources, and (c) responsibilities of basal publishers.

5.4.1 Teacher Agency and Specialized Knowledge Implications

There are many limitations on the teachers' decision-making concerning the purchase of basals. Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, and Murphy (1987) cited five factors that limit a teacher's freedom to make decisions about basals: (a) expert opinion, (b) state intervention, (c) district administrative policy, (d) publisher's marketing, and (e) teacher's beliefs. Goodman and his colleagues asserted that even though experts in the field of reading believe that teachers should choose the materials in the basal that are pertinent to students' needs, these same experts reinforced the idea that the teachers should follow the directions closely because they assume teachers will not use alternatives to the basal. Also, these critics noted that reading methods textbooks support the use of basals, claiming that the reading selections are of high quality, the teacher's manuals offer comprehensive and systematic instruction, and the basals are research based.

State intervention, or state policy, has led to states, especially California and Texas, to choose which basals are acceptable to be purchased by local school districts if they want state funding for the purchases. Goodman and his colleagues cited three reasons for a state adoption policy: (a) a lower cost through volume purchasing, (b) a selection of better textbooks, and (c) a uniform statewide curriculum. A state-wide adoption policy influences basals across the entire country, because publishers align all their products with the curriculum and instructional guidelines of Texas and California state policies. In addition, the states may institute policies setting "limits on how, when, and for what purpose the basals will be used (Goodman et al., 1987, p. 34).

There are also district administrative policies that teachers may need to adhere to. Although the amount of time that may be devoted to examining basal materials is small, few teachers are involved in the process, and publishing company representatives may have a large influence. Once a program is chosen, it becomes the reading curriculum, and teachers are expected to follow the basal's scope and sequence. They may be held accountable through administrative directives, observed by administration in their use of the basal program, monitored in the use of the basal tests to determine the adherence to the schedule or implementation directives. Even merit pay may be influence by teachers' use of basal resources.

The basal publishers play an important role because they must compete to stay profitable; therefore, they develop their products to ensure a share of the market. This is accomplished through delivering a product that state legislators and textbook committees are looking for and using key educational terminology to promote their products.

Finally, teachers' beliefs affect instructional decisions. Goodman and his colleagues assert that many teachers accept the basal as time-saving and the basic promise that the basal program is all that is needed to teach reading.

There is also evidence that while the basal program analyzed in this study offers detailed lesson plans and teaching approaches with a wide array of resources, the consumers of the program – teachers – are not provided with rationales or explanations to support their decision making. It is clear that teachers need specialized knowledge in order to evaluate the basal resources and teaching approaches.

Teachers need to understand why specific approaches and resources are effective in supporting beginning readers and they also need to understand what alternatives might be used for beginning readers who are not able to succeed with the given resources and approaches.

They must understand beginning reading research and a possess a deep knowledge of the skills that beginning readers must have before they can learn how to read. Teachers need to understand that phonemic awareness and letter/sound identification are key predictors in learning how to read. If a beginning reader is struggling, the teacher needs to work backwards to determine where the missing links are and rectify the problem. This means reteaching skills or using different approaches.

Teachers need to be able to differentiate instruction based on developmentally appropriate expectations. Dewitz and Jones (2012) asserted that teachers should focus on eight areas to enhance reading instruction when using a basal: (a) set goals, (b) use of read-alouds, (c) prior knowledge, (d) extensive reading (e) adapt scope and sequence (f) effective strategy instruction, (g) guided practice, and (h) differentiate instruction.

Setting goals consists of knowing what students should be able to achieve by the end of the year and is informed by current research and policy. Goals should be quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative goals are set according to a level of performance according to a high stakes assessment, or informal measures, such as running records or informal reading inventories. Qualitative goals focus on reading widely and deeply for pleasure and information, defining a type of book a student should be able to read independently by the end of the year, and describing what understandings and responses are expected.

Reading aloud to students allows students to build vocabulary, develop background knowledge, teacher modeling of comprehension of the story and build interest in literature. These read alouds should use authentic children's literature, prominent authors, are diverse, and compliment the topic or theme of the lesson. Both fiction and nonfiction books should be paired for reading.

Dewitz and Jones asserts that basal readers do not focus on the development of knowledge. The reading selections are loosely tied together to a theme and lessons only activate knowledge that students may already have. Therefore, the teacher should use literature read-alouds, discussions, and technology to build knowledge. The classroom should also have an assortment of books for independent reading to extend the lesson.

Brenner and Hiebert (2010) examined six third-grade basal programs and concluded that the volume of reading an average third grader may read was 15 minutes. Thus, extensive reading outside of the basal is needed to allow students to practice their skills, build fluency, improve comprehension, build background and vocabulary. In addition, the CCSS call for more complex texts across all grades. Therefore, independent reading in and out of the classroom is an important part of reading instruction.

The teacher must also examine the scope and sequence of the basal program. Teachers may need to deviate from the scope and sequence to address the needs of a struggling reader who did not master previous phonics skills. Most basal programs teach too many comprehension skills using too many different labels. Dewitz and Jones asserted that comprehension strategies should be taught early and used throughout the school year, focusing on a few important skills. These skills include: *predicting, summarizing, self-questioning, making inferences,* and *comprehension monitoring.*

Dewitz and Jones also contended that basal programs lack the explicit instruction that research suggests. Instruction should involve the gradual release method. This involves beginning with direct explanation of the strategy, when and why it would be used, and modeling the strategy extensively through the use of think alouds and examples.

After explaining the strategy, guided practice should occur. The teacher shows the students how to comprehend a text and supports practice by the students. During the guided reading of the story only questions that follow the structure of the text, help students make connections with the text and prior knowledge, focus on higher order thinking, and help students think metacognitively are asked. In addition, researched-based practices, such as reciprocal teaching and questioning the author are used to develop metacognition.

Finally, basal programs can not differentiate instruction because they do not know the individual student. Therefore, the teacher must make decisions using student data to determine the needs of her students. Struggling readers need more time in small groups with extensive explicit instruction, while strong readers will need less. The types of texts readers are expected to read need to match the student. The tasks also need to be differentiated to meet the needs of the students. For example, stronger readers may not need a story map, while struggling readers may need more scaffolding and support.

5.4.2 Resources for Evaluating Basal Resources

Teachers need tools to evaluate basal programs proposed for adoption, and they need to ask publishing companies for studies about how their resources have been implemented and how students of varying levels of proficiency have succeeded. Dewitz, Leahy, Jones, and Sullivan, (2010) noted that "core reading programs are not subjected to rigorous experimental research with students and teachers", yet the selection of a basal program is a crucial decision. Schools should devote a considerable amount of thought, time, and effort when choosing a new basal program.

Simmons and Kame'enui (2006) developed an evaluation tool to analyze core reading programs (basal programs) to assist schools with the Reading First program. Reading First was a state grant program created when the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* based on the NRP policy was enacted. To receive the grant, schools were required to used basal programs that were scientifically based. This checklist focused on program efficacy, explicit, systematic instruction, and evidence that the program included the five areas of reading that the NRP analyzed: *phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary,* and *comprehension*. The checklist ratings were based on teacher and administration judgment. Moreover, this guide was only a checklist to determine whether the publishers included the five areas of reading. Therefore, it did not delve into instruction or consider the inclusion of grammar, writing, and intervention materials. Dewitz and his colleagues (2010) created a reading guide (Reading GPS) that guided the consumer through a series of inquiries about the reading instruction in a basal program. This guide was more thorough than Simmons and Kame'enui (2006) in that it allowed a thorough guided exploration into six areas of reading instruction: *texts; phonemic awareness, phonics, and sight words; fluency; vocabulary and prior knowledge; comprehensions;* and *small group instruction.*

In Part I, the anthologies, leveled readers and decodable texts were examined. The genre of the texts and the word count and word length of the leveled and decodable books were to be examined. Part II focused on phonemic awareness, phonics and sight words. The scope and sequence was to be examined in accordance to research and best practice. Next, the instruction for these skills were to be examined focusing on characteristics of good instruction. The instructional routine for fluency was examined in Part III, while Part IV focused on vocabulary and prior knowledge. The words chosen for vocabulary and lesson were examined and how

prior knowledge was developed. Also, the teacher read-aloud was examined to determine the quality of the literature chosen. Part V focused on the skills and strategies that were taught for comprehension, how they were taught, and the guided practice available. The last section was Part IV focusing on small group instruction. This allowed teachers to evaluate differentiated instruction.

5.4.3 Responsibilities of Basal Publishers

One of the areas in this study that was analyzed was the topics emphasized in the frontmatter. All the editions, except 2012, contain some information discussing what the program delivers and its specific features. Across the editions, it is apparent that the publishers focused on the then-current educational topics. The 1996 and 1999 editions provide a one page letter describing their basal program, while the newer editions provide multiple pages describing how their program aligns with research or policy. But, publishers need to provide more information about their decision making, such as the scope and sequence and instructional methods chosen based on research. Although the publishers list teachers and schools that have reviewed the basal program, there are not any results or comments that are available to determine the effectiveness of the materials or programs.

Purchasing a basal program is a large investment. The cost is between $3000.00 and $4000.00 to outfit one classroom with teacher manuals, student anthologies, leveled readers, decodable books, practice books, letter and word cards, and other supplemental resources and access online materials. Such an investment requires due diligence in determining the best choice for the needs of the students of the school district.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study of the content, resources, and instructional approaches in a basal reading series stemmed from my professional experiences as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and literacy coach. Most of my career has centered around the position of reading specialist in a high-poverty school. My college courses were based on the whole language framework, while my career has seen the implementation of No Child Left Behind and the Common Core State Standards. I have taught third grade classes using the basal program and have supported many teachers across kindergarten through fifth grade who use the basal program. Many conversations with colleagues have taken place over the years about teaching beginning reading, changes that have occurred in research, and the best way to reach struggling readers.

Currently, I am a reading specialist for my district's kindergarten program. My appointment occurred a few years ago when the district adopted a new basal program, which is aligned with the Common Core. Due to the increased demands across the early years in this new basal, and the lack of skills that so many of the students are arriving with, there are many students that need support from the first day of kindergarten. Thus, many of these students are at risk of failing.

I am hopeful that this investigation will inform other teachers and those who make decisions about curriculum in a few ways. First, this investigation should give teachers and decision makers a solid background of how authorship, research, and especially policy has affected basal reading programs across the past twenty years. With that knowledge, teachers and decisions makers can see the disconnect between research and application.

This investigation could also inform decision makers about the importance in developing a comprehensive plan for purchasing a basal program. This plan should include selecting committee members, learning about effective reading instruction, allowing plenty of time to conduct an in-depth analysis of a program, and adequately reviewing the materials using a strong textbook evaluation instrument. After the basal resources are analyzed, the information needs to be provided to teachers and administrators in accessible formats and discussed at length before any final decisions are made.

Finally, it is apparent from this research that the basal will continue to be a staple of beginning reading. Teachers and decision makers must be knowledgeable about what current research says about effective reading instruction and how policy may affect beginning reading. They need to realize that the basal cannot address all learners or address all skills thoroughly. Administrators need to encourage teachers to use professional judgment and adjust the basal scope and sequence and supplement the basal program to fit students' needs. We must all keep in mind that the basal is only one tool in the teaching of beginning of reading and teachers have a professional responsibility to employ a complete toolbox of teaching tools to ensure a successful literacy program.

APPENDIX

MATRIX OF RESEARCH STUDIES

Table 5 ***Matrix of Research Studies***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
An Analysis of Dimensions That Affect the Development of Code-Breaking Ability in Eight Beginning Reading Programs Beck & McCaslin (1978)	How is instruction arranged in the first two grades of elementary school for teaching beginning readers to break the code?	Analyzed 3 dimensions (letter/sound correspondences that are taught, their sequencing, and the pedagogy of the lessons) in 8 programs (1st grade)	A model for successful reading programs should include: • direct, explicit instruction of letter/sound correspondences. • an instructional strategy for teaching blending letter/sound correspondences into words • repeated opportunities to blend the letter/sound correspondences into words in connected text

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Instructional Dimensions That May Affect Reading Comprehension: Examples from Two Commercial Reading Programs Beck, McKeown, McCaslin, & Burkes (1979)	What issues might affect students' comprehension?	Analyzed 2 programs focusing on characteristics of the texts, omitting words and other textual limitations, effect of pictures on comprehension, background knowledge, vocabulary, setting the purpose for reading, stopping point during reading and after-reading questioning.	Texts in beginning readers might be difficult to comprehend because of: • omission of information, or omission or substitution of key words • pictures should help clarify texts • prereading activities were reduced • learning new words were left to chance • there were inappropriate stopping points in stories • questions were not designed toward synthesizing story information • the information could be used as a basis for empirical investigation to improve reading instruction

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
An analysis of Two Beginning Reading Programs: Some Facts and Some Opinions Beck & Block (1979)	What letter/sound correspondences are taught through 2nd grade? When are they taught? How are they taught?	Analyzed a basal program and a code-emphasis program to determine how many letter/sound correspondences were taught in 1st and 2nd grade, which letter/sound correspondences were taught, how many meaningful words could be generated, sight word repetition and comprehension activities.	• both programs introduced approximately 90 correspondences through 2nd grade, with the basal covering less in 1st • the code-emphasis taught regular letter/sound correspondences, with long vowels and digraphs introduced in 2nd grade • the basal program introduced multiple sounds in close proximity, generated a greater number of meaningful words, and, selected high utility sight words, including them over and over again in stories • both programs developed comprehension before, during, and after reading • it was revealed that more information was needed about comprehension instruction

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Reading Comprehension Instruction in Five Basal Reader Series Dolores Durkin 1981	What is the recommendation for teaching children how to comprehend, kindergarten through sixth grade, and is there a match between what was seen in classroom observations and what is in the manuals?	Categorized comprehension activities into six areas: instruction, review, application, practice, preparation and assessment. Reviewed the basals to determine instructional support.	• There was not a carefully constructed instructional plan. The basals neglected direct instruction and made use of numerous assessments and practice exercises.
So What's New in the New Basals? A Focus on First Grade James V. Hoffman, Sarah J. McCarthey, Judy Abbott, Cheryl Christian, Laura Corman, Catherine Curry, Mark Dressman, Bonnie Elliott, Debra Matherne, and Debra Stahle 1994	What effect has the shift in the market-place demands had on the nature of basals offered by educational publishers?	Analyzed five 1993 basals and compared them to 1986/1987 basals, focusing on total number of words, number of unique words, readability levels, literary quality and features of the teachers' editions.	1986 Programs • Utilized Directed Reading Activity • Offered literal questions 1993 Programs • Fewer words in a story, but more unique words • Number of syllables in words and number of words in a sentence increased • No vocabulary control or repetition in the newer programs • Less decodable • Stories were from published literature and more engaging, with an increase in poetry and predictable books • Greater emphasis on inferential questions.

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Analyzing Beginning Reading Programs: The Relationship Between Decoding Instruction and Text Stein, Johnson & Gutlohn (1999)	What is the predominant approach to early decoding instruction and the extent to which that instruction is related to the text selections?	Analyzed 7 basal programs and 2 phonics programs, focusing on explicit phonics instruction and decodable text.	There was a significant gap between research and practice: • the predominant approach to phonics was implicit (instead of explicit) • the words in the text selections had little relationship to the decoding instruction • the texts contained less than 15% wholly decodable words • students would not be able to read 32% to 57% of the words in the selections
Decodable Texts for Beginning Reading Instructions: The Year 2000 Basals Hoffman, Sailors, & Patterson (2002)	What are the general features of the first-grade pupil texts in the year 2000 programs with respect to instructional design, accessibility and engaging qualities? In terms of these features, how are the Year 2000 programs different from the programs approved in Texas 1985 and 1993 adoption cycles?	Analyzed 5 basals (1st grade) submitted for Texas textbook adoption for decodability and compared them to the 1987 and 1993 adopted basals.	Instructional design publishers are providing practice with fewer words at earlier levels Accessibility • there were no clear patterns in the predictability of designated decodable text and non-decodable text Engaging Qualities • the more decodable the text, the lower ratings on engaging qualities. Differences • the 2000 basals had a more controlled vocabulary for beginning readers than the 1993 series, but not as controlled as the 1987 programs.

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Variability in Text Features in Six Grade 1 Basal Reading Programs Foorman, Francis, Davidson, Harm, & Griffin (2004)		Description of decodability features (lexical, semantic, syntactic) of the text selections in 6 first grade basal reading programs.	• the 6 basal programs differed substantially in the composition of their text selections for Grade 1 • the majority of words were above the vocabulary level of many 1st graders • the decodability mandate rate of 75% to 80% is met by only 2 programs • to meet decodability words needed to be taught holistically first • the basals varied widely in the number of phonic elements taught and in the care with which words are introduced that are decodable
The Confluence of Two Policy Mandates: Core Reading Programs and Third-Grade Retention in Florida McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig (2006)	In what ways do the structure and content of the core materials and the guidance they offer teachers affect low-achieving third graders' efforts to meet grade-level comprehension standards?	Analyzed two basal programs to determine how well they reflect current research in reading instruction and evaluated whether the programs properly prepared third graders for the FCAT.	• one program included more preparation for reading, vocabulary, and fluency while the other program included more comprehension study • both programs had many reading selections that were above the reading level of struggling learners • mandated basal programs did not provide sufficient support to teachers of low-achieving high-poverty students

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Comparison of Readability and Decodability Levels Across Five First Grade Basal Programs Maslin (2007)	How do the new basal programs compare to each other for important criteria for beginning stage readers? Are the readers decodable? Do they provide practice with newly mastered orthographic cues? Are the readers written on an appropriate level for students?	Analyzed 5 of the top-selling basal readers for phonics instruction sequence, levels of decodable text and readability (1st Grade).	Phonics Instruction • sequence of phonics instruction based on developmental progression • range from .4 correlation to .96 correlation Readability • a great deal of variability in readability across the anthology selections • many leveled higher than 1st grade • it was determined that students would not be able to read anywhere from 16% to 25% of the text Decodability • vocabulary is being controlled within passages • students are given increased opportunities to practice their sound-spelling correspondence knowledge (looked at both decodable books and the anthology passages)

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
How is Contextualized Spelling Used to Support Reading in First-Grade Core Reading Programs? Cooke, Slee, & Young (2008)	How do current first-grade core reading programs embed spelling responses into reading instruction? (contextualized spelling)	Analyzed 5 programs through a coding system. (1st grade) Identified 6 different opportunities where spelling production might be used to support reading.	• contextualized spelling is not a consistent feature of reading lesson components
Comprehension Strategy Instruction in Core Reading Programs Dewitz, Jones, & Leahy (2009)	What skills and strategies are recommended to be taught? How are these skills and strategies recommended to be taught? What instructional designs do the programs employ? How do the spacing and timing of comprehension skills and strategy instruction in core programs compare with how these skills were taught in original research studies?	Curriculum analysis of comprehension instruction in grades 3, 4 and 5 in 5 of the most widely used core reading programs.	• NRP recommends 7 strategies while the basals covered from 18 to 29 skills and strategies • all the programs include modeling of skills and strategies by teachers, but very seldom are students asked to model the skills and strategies themselves • the release-of-responsibility model is the preferred manner – none of the programs employed this model with any consistency or not at all • none of the programs cover comprehension skills and strategies with the intensity suggested in the NRP research • the programs also lacked practice

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
If I Follow the Teachers' Editions, Isn't That Enough? Analyzing Reading Volume in Six Core Reading Programs Brenner and Hiebert (2010)	What is the volume of words provided in the core student texts? How many words and for how many minutes would students read if their teachers followed the guidance in the teachers' edition? Is text differentiated for students at different proficiency levels – both in terms of the difficulty of the text and also in terms of the amount of reading? What are the instructional contexts in which the reading is to occur?	Analyzed 6 core reading programs (3rd grade) to determine the number of words of text and the volume of reading afforded to students.	• 4 programs had similar number of words for a week-long lesson (avg. 3,122) • number of words and minutes of reading recommended in the teachers' edition across the 6 programs equaled 16.7 minutes of reading per day in the 90-minute reading block • text is not differentiated for students at different proficiency levels • advanced readers may read a greater number of words then lower level readers • it was impossible to determine the contexts of reading based on the information in the suggested lesson planner

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Vocabulary Instruction in Commonly Used Kindergarten Core Reading Curricula Wright & Neuman (2013)	To what extent does commonly used core reading curricular material support vocabulary instruction in kindergarten?	Analyzed 4 basal programs focusing on how many words taught each week, how words were selected and instructional procedure.	• Wide disparity of words taught (from 2 to 20) • No apparent organization to how words were chosen and most were easy, basic words that did not need instruction • The most common instructional practice was the use of definitions, • all programs included practice and review, but only one used progress monitoring • Vocabulary instruction did not follow recommendations of research.
An Analysis of Two Reading Intervention Programs: How Do the Words, Texts, and Programs Compare? Murray, Munger, & Hiebert (2014)	How do two commercially available first-grade intervention programs compare at the word level, text level, and program level?	Analyzed 2 first-grade intervention programs (decodable text vs. leveled text) focusing on word level, text level, and program level.	• 50% of words in both programs were high frequency. Decodable Text • higher percentage of phonetically regular words • 70% match between phonics instruction and text Leveled Text • more multisyllabic words • 30% match between phonics instruction and text

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Assessing the Cognitive Demands of a Century of Reading Curricula: An Analysis of Reading Text and Comprehension Tasks from 1910 to 2000 Stevens, Liu, Baker, Ray, Eckert, Gamson (2015)	What were the changes in the cognitive demands of reading text for third and sixth grade from 1910 to 2000?	54 3rd grade and 27 6th grade textbooks were examined for text difficulty. The cognitive demands of comprehension tasks were examined.	3rd Grade • consistent pattern of increasing cognitive demands in comprehension tasks from 1960s through 2000s • recent editions contained more demanding comprehension questions • types of questions have increased in complexity • increase in higher-level questions 6th Grade • cognitive demands stable since 1950 • same increase in cognitive demands as 3rd grade • increase in higher-level questions
Has First-Grade Core Reading Program Text Complexity Changed Across Six Decades? Fitzgerald, Elmore, Relyea, Hiebert, Stenner (2015)	Did overall text complexity levels shift across seven program years of one publisher? Did the progression of text-characteristic complexity from the beginning to the end of first grade vary across program years? Did text characteristic levels vary as a function of program year?	7 first grade anthologies were examined for overall text complexity and nine text characteristics using computer-based programs.	lowest number of new words – 1971 • highest number of new words – 1983 • fewest unique words – 1962 • most unique words – 207 and 2013 • very small number of new words introduced early in 1962 • 4 times number of new words introduced in 2007 and 2014 • significant increase in overall text complexity across the years

Table 5 ***(continued)***

Research on Content Analysis of Literacy Curriculum Materials	Research Questions	Methodologies	Results
Changing Readers, Changing Texts: Beginning Reading Texts from 1960 to 2010 Hiebert (2015)	What were the major turning points in beginning reading instruction over the past 50 years?	Examined 4 editions that were watersheds in beginning reading texts (1962, 1993, 2000, and 2008 and 2013) for cognitive load and linguistic content.	1962 edition • repeated a core group of high frequency words at least 10 times • 10 new words introduced for every 100 words • no word appeared only once 1993 edition • used predictable text • 29 new words introduced for every 100 words • almost 50% of words appeared only once 2000 edition • 42% decodable • number of new words and single words stayed the same as 1993 2008 edition was similar to 2000 • formal reading instruction moves to kindergarten • kindergarten texts highly decodable – 80% 2013 editions • showed slightly higher expectations at end of 1st grade • no difference in kindergarten

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print.* Cambridge, MA:MIT Press.

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A. & Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading.* Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Education, National Institute of Education, Center for the Study of Reading.

Baumann, J. F., Chard, D. J., Cooks, J., Cooper, J. D., Gersten, R., Lipson, M., Morrow, L. M., …Fountas, I. (2012). *Journeys.* Orlando, FL: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt.

Baumann, J. F., Chard, D. J., Cooks, J., Cooper, J. D., Gersten, R., Lipson, M., Morrow, L. M., …Fountas, I. (2014). *Journeys Common Core.* Orlando, FL: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt.

Beck, I. L, & Block, K. K. (1979). An analysis of two beginning reading programs: Some facts and some opinions. In L. B. Resnick and P. A. Weaver (Eds.), *Theory and practice of early reading* (Vol. 1, pp. 279-318). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Beck, I. L. & McCaslin, E. S. (1978). An analysis of dimensions that affect the development of code-breaking ability in eight beginning reading programs. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, Learning Research and Development Center, 1978. (LRDC Publication 1978/6)

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G. McKeown, & Kucan, L. (2001). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., McCaslin, E. S., & Burkes, A. M. (1979). Instructional dimensions that may affect reading comprehension: Examples from two commercial reading programs. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, Learning Research and Development Center, 1979.

Beck, I. L., Farr, R.C., Strickland, D. S., Ada, A. F., Brechtel, M., McKeown, M., Roser, N., Yopp, H. K.,…Monti, D.A. (2003). *Trophies.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt.

Beck, I. L., Farr, R. C., Strickland, D. S., Ada, A. F., Brechtel, M., McKeown, M., Roser, N., Yopp, H. K.,…Monti, D.A. (2009). *Storytown.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt.

Bond, G. L., & Dykstra, R. (1967). The cooperative research program in first-grade reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2, 1-142.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-41.

Brenner, D., & Hiebert, E. H. (2010). If I follow the teachers' editions, isn't that enough? Analyzing reading volume in six core reading programs. *The Elementary School Journal*, 110(3), 347-363. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648/982

Chall, J. (1967). *Learning to read, the great debate*. New York, N.Y.: McGraw Hill.

Coleman, D. & Pimentel, S. (2012). Revised publisher's criteria for the common core state standards in English language arts and literacy, grades K-2. Retrieved June 14, 2014 from Common Core State Standards Initiative Web site: www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_K-2.pdf

Cooke, N. L., Slee, J. M., & Young, C. A. (2008). How is contextualized spelling used to support reading in first-grade core reading programs? *Reading Improvement*, 45(1), 26-45.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2011). Retrieved July 20, 2011 from Common Core State Standards Initiative Web Site: http://corestandards.org

Dewitz, P., & Jones, J. (2013). Using basal readers: From dutiful fidelity to intelligent decision making. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(5), 391-400.

Dewitz, P., Jones, J, & Leahy, S. (2009). Comprehension strategy instruction in core reading programs. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 44(2), 102-126. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20462721

Dewitz, P., Leahy, S. B., Jones, J. & Sullivan, P. M. (2010). *The essential guide to selecting and using core reading programs.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Durkin, D. (1981). Reading comprehension instruction in five basal reader series. *Reading Research Quarterly*,16(4), 515-544. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/747314 1.11.1

Farr, R. C., Strickland, D. S., Abrahamson, R. F., Church, E. B., Coulter, B. B., Cullinan, B. E., …Sternberg, R. J. (1996). *Treasury of Literature.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Farr, R. C., Strickland, D. S., Abrahamson, R. F., Ada, A. F., Church, E. B., Coulter, B. B., …Salinas, R. (1999). *Signatures.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Farr, R. C., Strickland, D. S., Abrahamson, R. F., Ada, A. F., Cullinan, B. E., McKeown, M.,… Olivares, A. (2001). *Collections.* Orlando, FL.: Harcourt.

Fitzgerald, J., Elmore, J., Relyea, J. E., Hiebert, E. H., & Stenner, A. J. (2015). Has First-Grade core reading program text complexity changed across six decades? *Reading Research Quarterly,* 51(1), 7-28. doi:10.1002/rrq.115

Flesch, R. (1983). *Why Johnny can't read and what you can do about it*. New York, N.Y: Harper.

Foorman, B. R., Francis, D. J., Davidson, K. C., Harm, M. W., & Griffin, J. (2004). Variability in text features in six grade 1 basal reading programs. *Scientific Studies of Reading,* 8(2), 167-197. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532799xssr0802_4

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2008). *Leveled literacy intervention.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Goodman, K. S., Shannon, P., Freeman, Y. S., & Murphy, S. (1987). *Report card on basal readers.* Katonah, N.Y: Owen.

Graves, M. F., & Dykstra, R. (1997). Contextualizing the first-grade studies: What is the best way to teach children to read? *Reading Research Quarterly*, *32,* 342-344.

Hiebert, E. H. (2015). Changing readers, changing texts: Beginning reading texts from 1960 to 2010. *Journal of Education*, 195(3), 1.

Hoffman, J. V., McCarthey, S. J., Abbott, J., Christian, C., Coleman, L., Curry, C.,… Stahle, D. (1994). So what's new in the new basals? A focus on first grade. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 26(1), 46-73.

Hoffman, J. V., Sailors, M. & Patterson, E. U. (2002). Decodable texts for beginning reading instruction. (CIERA report #1-016) Retrieved September 21, 2011, from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement Web site: http://www.ciera.org

Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Philippines: Addison-Wesley.

Juel, C., Paratore, J. R., Simmons, D., & Vaughn, S. (2008). *My sidewalks on reading street.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.

Krippendorf, K., (1980) *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Maslin, P. (2007). Comparison of readability and decodability levels across five first grade basal programs. *Reading Improvement,* 44(2), 59-75.

McGill-Franzen, A., Zmach, C., Solic, K. & Zeig, J. L. (2006). The confluence of two policy mandates: Core reading programs and third-grade retention in Florida. *The Elementary School Journal,* 107(1), 67-91. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086509527

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014) *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Murray, M. S., Munger, K. A., & Hiebert, E. H. (2014). An analysis of two reading intervention programs: How do the words, texts, and programs compare? *The Elementary School Journal*, 114(1), 479-500. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/675635

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (2016). Retrieved April 24, 2016 from http://educationnorthwest.org/traits

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Neuman, S. B., & Dwyer, J. (2009). Missing in action: Vocabulary instruction in pre-k. *Reading Teacher*, 62, 384-392.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. (2014). Retrieved August 5, 2014 from www.parcconline.org

Pearson, P. D. (2000). Reading in the twentieth century. (CIERA report #01-08) University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. Retrieved from http://www.ciera.org/library/archive/2001-09/0108pdp.pdf.

Pearson, P. D. (2004) The reading wars. *Educational Policy*, *18*, 216-252. doi:10.1177/0895904803260041

Reppen, R., & Ide, N. (2004). The American National Corpus: Overall goals and the first release, *Journal of English Linguistics*, 32, 105-113.

Simmons, D. C. & Kame'enui, E. J. (2006). A consumer's guide to analyzing a core reading program Grades K-3: A critical elements analysis. Retrieved October 12, 2016 from http://oregonreadingfirst.uoregon.edu

Snow, C. E., Burns, S. M., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Stein, M., Johnson, B., & Gutlohn, L. (1999). Analyzing beginning reading programs: The relationship between decoding instruction and text. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20(5), 275-287.

Stevens, R. J., Liu, X., Baker, D. P., Ray, M., Eckert, S., & Gamson, D. (2015). Assessing the cognitive demands of a century of reading curricula: An analysis of reading text and

comprehension tasks from 1910 to 2000. *American Educational Research Journal,* 52(3), 582. doi:10.3102/0002831215573531

Teale, W.H. (1995). Young children and reading trends across the twentieth century. *Journal of Education, 177,* 95-127.

Wright, T. S. & Neuman, S. B. (2013). Vocabulary instruction in commonly used kindergarten core reading curricula. *The Elementary School Journal,* 113(3), 386-408. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668766